Week ending Jan. 23 1960

JOHN BULL

Everybody's Weekly

EVERY WEDNESDAY 5d

DEATH OF A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN

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How to find a bargain

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Free Speech

JOHN BULL pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech." Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to our Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post and in our feature "We Advise."

Don't Put Up With It

AS a nation we have many faults and many virtues—and one fault is that we can't tell which are which.

During the war it was a virtue to put up with things—rationing, queues, dull food. But the war's been over a long time now. Putting up with things is now a fault.

When I see the bad service one gets in shops, the casual informality of public servants, the long queues for buses, the dirt of our stations, I wonder if the British haven't sunk into a deadly apathy.

Our motto of the sixties should be—nothing but the best.—MRS. JOAN BROXBONE, Edinburgh.

Crazy, Man, Crazy

One evening recently while driving along the A4 from Bristol and wishing to overtake a long-distance lorry I flashed my spotlight. The lorry driver flashed his and I overtook him.

When alongside I flashed my headlights to thank him for letting me know the road was clear.

After I completed my overtake he flashed his foglight to thank me for thanking him for his road-clear signal.

Impressed by his good manners I flashed my backing light to thank him for thanking me for thanking him.

This, however, was not the end of the exchange. Looking in my mirror I saw him flashing his cab light.

What was I to do—run a Union Jack up my aerial or stop and shake hands with him?

I did nothing and drove on, feeling I had lost a round in the courtesy-driving game.—ROBIN G. MACDONALD, Brondesbury Park, London, N.W.2.

My Missing Stamp

I posted a few cards and on returning home discovered that I had forgotten to stamp one. I went back to the box and when the postman came explained what had happened. I gave him full details of the card and asked if I could have it back.

He found the card, but refused to give it to me, saying I could put a stamp on it if I had one with me. I did not have a stamp and had to let the card go.

Was the postman right in refusing to let me have the card? Surely several

JOHN BULL

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The Cover

HE's won his point, it appears, and without so much as a word. House-proud Mother, checked in her stride, knows that if it weren't for people like *him*, probing the realm of motive power today, there'd be no more labour-saving gadgets for people like *her* tomorrow. For the moment, this is a man's world—of coaches and couplings, transformers and turntables. But Mother will win in the end. "Man's plans," says Heseltine, "have a strange habit of turning to dust."

THAT'S ME! ON HOLIDAY

YOU will recognize yourself in Hilary Agate's fascinating true-to-life portrait of Britain at the seaside. But it's a YOU the neighbours never see—a carefree YOU with your hair down

Don't miss it NEXT WEEK

people would have been inconvenienced because there was no stamp.—GEORGE GUNN, West Derby Road, Liverpool, 13.

"We have to have a hard-and-fast rule that once-posted letters cannot be given back in any circumstances," says the Post Office.

"For one thing we have no certain way of knowing whether or not the person who wants the letter or card back actually sent it."

Modest Men

My wife and her friends think nothing of being fully examined by male doctors. Yet the only time I found that I was to be examined by a woman doctor I ran a mile from the surgery. Are we men more modest than women? —JACK WINDSOR, London, S.E.27.

Deadly Draughts

How is it that when part of the body is exposed to draughts we become more susceptible to colds than when our whole body is exposed to a strong wind? — BRIAN FORSYTH, Meldrum Crescent, Burntisland, Fife.

"We tried sitting people in draughts and then in cold winds," says the Common Cold Research Centre at Salisbury. "There was no difference at all."

"What may make people think that a draught gives them a cold is that when someone is getting a cold they notice draughts and low temperatures which otherwise they would never feel.

"However, our experiments seem to show that being cold does not in itself give people colds."

Turn Up For The Book

I wish tailors would copy a trans-atlantic idea for ready-made trousers. Made-up trousers are often sold without turnups and they are then sewn to the individual leg measurements.

Invariably I have the length altered anyway, so there would be no more delay with this system.—N. F. TURNER, Blackburn, Lancs.

I Had A Fit

Although born within sound of Bow Bells I had always flattered myself that I had a decided B.B.C. accent. One afternoon when I was arguing on some controversial topic my son quietly placed a tape-recorder beside me.

I almost had a fit when he played it back. I sounded like the real out-and-out Cockney that I am proud to be.—MRS. S. MASTERS, Bloomfield Road, Woolwich.

Test Their Emotions

I was interested in the letter about driving tests ("Free Speech," January 2).

The present system examines the candidate's ability to handle the mechanics of a car and discovers whether he has road sense—but ignores a third and vital factor, emotional stability.

This decides whether that driver will remain calm under the trying conditions of modern driving.

I would like to see psychological tests given to each would-be driver. And that might reduce the number of unsuitable drivers now let loose on to the roads.—L. A. DUNKLING, Creswick Road, London, W.3.

Dai The Latin

As a boy I spent my holidays on a Cardiganshire farm and can remember that for any misdemeanour my uncle threatened to pack me off to Patagonia.

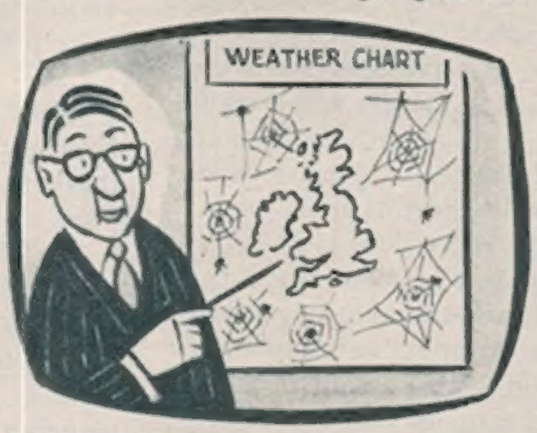
I couldn't understand why then, but have since heard that many people of Welsh stock live in this part of South America.

Has any Welsh culture and tradition survived? Do they sing "Sospan Fach" on the pampas?—HARRY T. EVANS, Byfleet, Surrey.

A recognizable form of Welsh is still spoken in parts of Patagonia, says a historian. Welshmen first settled in Sarmiento as early as 1865—and they established a further group in the 16 de Octubre Valley in 1886. It is not surprising that folk memories of the emigrations still survived in their native valleys.

Web Weather

Did you know that the spider is a weather expert? If it is going to rain



he promptly shortens the long threads which support his web.

If it is going to be warm and fine he lengthens them.

If the spider is listless by the side of his web after a shower it indicates rains to come.

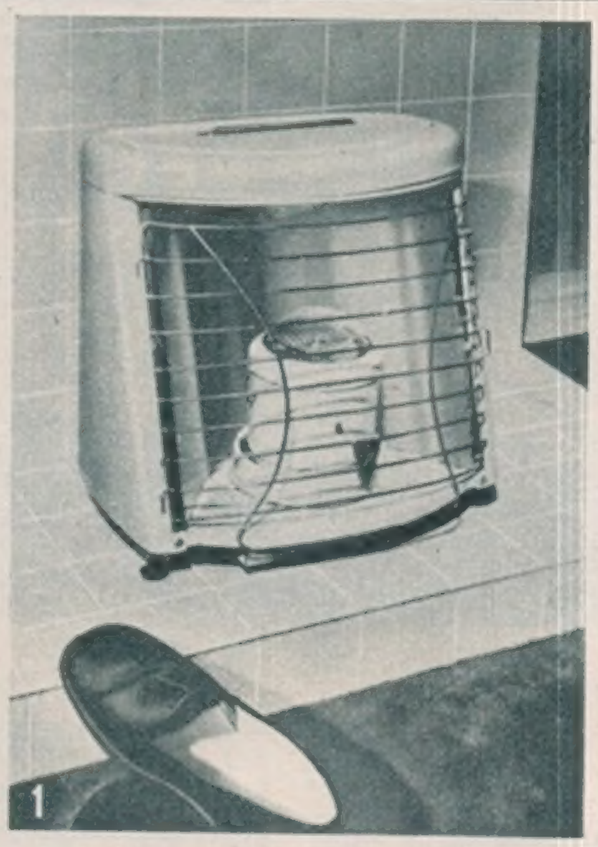
If he dangles at the end of his web expect intense heat. And if he moves jerkily about his web watch out for a gale.—MISS B. M. O'DONNELL, Aberdeen Road, Bristol, 6.

Anything You Say . . .

In our criminal courts today statements which are made by accused people to the police are often objected to by defence counsel.

Having served as a juryman I have some doubts about the methods attributed to the police in obtaining many of these statements.

Would it not be better for justice if all statements were made in the presence of a magistrate?—THOMAS SULLIVAN, Fallowfield, Manchester.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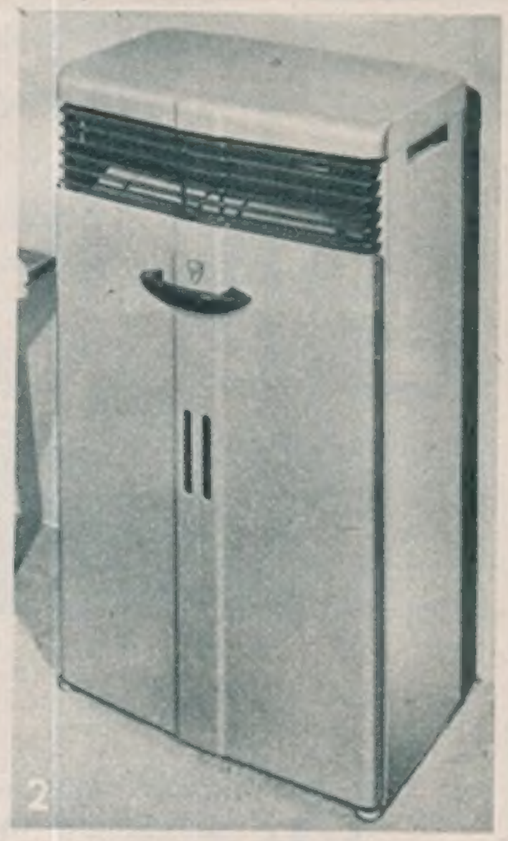
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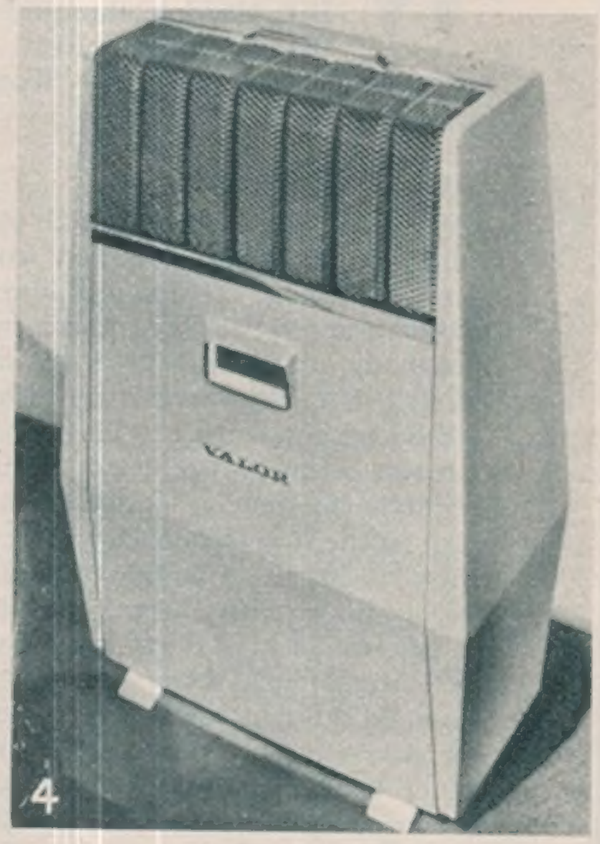
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EDGE OF FEAR

WAITING outside the Rowandale showground that evening, I saw Bill Mardon clumping back from the Traveller's Rest. "Here's a fine how-d'ye-do," he said. "Tom Pierce has gone."

"Gone!"

"Aye. Must have forgot."

While we were looking at each other ruefully, young David Heath returned from searching at the Red Lion. "No sign of him," he said.

Bill grunted. "Nay, there wouldn't be. Somebody at the Traveller's saw him drive off. Likely a few pints have drowned his memory."

David gave a whistle. "Then what'll we do?"

It was certainly a problem. John Foster, my neighbour in Iredale, had given the three of us a lift to the Rowandale show. Having to leave early, to attend a parish council meeting, he had arranged with Pierce, another neighbour, to take us back. To get home by road was a good fifty miles. Walking direct over the fells we could do it in about three hours.

I glanced at my watch. Five past eight. It would be light enough until ten. After that there ought to be a moon, though the rags of sepia cloud prowling across from the north-west might mask it at times.

"Let's foot it," I said. "Follow up the Rowan beck, and then. . . ."

"There's a shorter way than that," said Bill, and I stared at him in disbelief, because I knew those fells reasonably well, and a man tramping over to Iredale would either have to cross the shallow spot where the bottom of Black Ghyll drained into the Rowan beck, or else struggle up the north bank of the ghyll for fifteen hundred weary feet to where it commenced as a modest crack between a couple of summits. Thence downwards it became a wicked ravine, deep and sheer.

Bill grinned. "I'll show tha," he said. "Coom on."

STILL puzzled, but not doubting a local chap of his experience, I followed him up a trod winding through the brackens, David at my side. Bill walked with a kind of sturdy roll, bow-legged, wide shoulders swaying, an ungainly and yet powerful and confident action. By contrast, David might have been a faun, slender, small-boned, graceful. The difference extended to their faces and their characters. Bill's expression had a placid dourness, his brown eyes held no hint of imagination. Born in Iredale, he had been Foster's hired man for the past eight years.

David, with his sensitive mouth, his nervous manner, seemed out of place among this shaggy wildness. Brought up in a town, son of an old friend of Foster, he had lost his parents at sixteen in a car smash. Foster had brought him to live at Skaldermains and started to teach him something of farming.

The lad was grateful, and boyishly keen. Now, at twenty, he knew quite a deal about the job. But his timid temperament must have been a sore handicap.

Bill was plugging on steadily. He had left the trod and started to clamber up through purple tangles of heather clinging to a steep breast. Down below, the light in Rowandale was fading to a smoky grey-green.

Panting a bit, I said to David: "Still set on being a farmer?"

He smiled and nodded, and I found myself wanting to smile, too.

DAVID was in love with Dinah Foster, a lass of nineteen who could milk a cow, wring a chicken's neck, or mend a wall gap with the best of them. What her feeling about him was I could only guess, but I reckoned it might be a kind of affectionate pity, and that, after all, can sometimes be akin to love. Once, overhearing them talking about a pet of his, a Lakeland terrier called Nib, I caught a revealing remark of Dinah's. "You're too soft-hearted to train a dog. Yet I'm daft enough to like you for it."

Bill had left the heather behind and was pushing up a barren, stony breast pricked by a few bents growing between clutters of stones.

I said to David: "We've been going nearly an hour and a half. Wonder what he's up to."

We knew soon. In five minutes we were treading the bank of Black Ghyll, some eight hundred feet above its junction with the Rowan beck. Pausing for a breather, I peered down those dank and dizzy walls, part of them naked rock, part plastered with slimy lichens and sodden mosses. At the point where we stood the ravine had extra width, and immediately below us was a slide of stone dropping at some sixty degrees to a humpy, projecting snout of rock. Beneath that I had a glimpse of stunted rowans and ashes sticking out vertically from the wall of the ghyll. It was an uninviting descent, and I could pick out no ascent up the other side. But, having full trust in Bill, I was expecting him to make for the stone slide.

I was wrong. He swung right, higher along the ridge of the bank, to a point where the ghyll narrows.

"There," he said suddenly, "yonder."

What he was pointing at set me grimacing. The banks at this spot, no more than thirty feet apart, dropped plumb for two hundred to the shadowy bed of the gully where water oozed and bubbled between boulders. From bank to bank a fallen ash tree spanned the emptiness, its snaky, exposed roots, on our side, grimed with earth and flints.

"Blown down a month since," said Bill. "It's a handy bridge."

I saw David turn pale. It wasn't surprising. The idea of sitting astride that trunk and edging along it gave me a squeezing in the stomach.

"From t'other side down to Skaldermains is less than an hour," said Bill.

David never moved. His lips were sticky. I could have cursed Bill for what he had done, and yet I knew there had been no malice behind it. It was simply that he possessed not one jot of imagination.

Bill was already hauling himself over the roots. David spoke, his voice thin and taut.

"I can't. I can't!"

"Nay, but 'tis nowt," said Bill reassuringly. "Safe as houses."

He was astride the trunk, his hands gripping it in front of him, his legs dangling, for all the world like a competitor perched on a pole for a pillow-fight. Next, he began to coax himself along in short, sliding jerks.

Had I been alone, I would have avoided that crossing, and plumped for safety. It would have meant extra effort, the dragging ascent to the source of the ghyll, and the descent down the other side, maybe an added hour of walking. But in some queer fashion it struck me that with David present, to baulk at the challenge would be a mistake. Here was a great chance to help him conquer himself.

I SAID: "Listen, David. If that tree was stretched across a six-foot drop, you wouldn't think twice. Don't look down, and you'll be right as rain."

The thing to do was to set an example at once. Still rather queasy, I sat with the ash between my thighs, and gripping with pretty desperate fingers, began to shuffle over the crossing. Half-way, I made the mistake of glancing below. Though I have a head for height, that vertical glimpse brought hot froth into the back of my throat. From then onwards I stared at the sky beyond the bank in front of me. Bill had plumped down on a boulder and was slicing some black twist for his pipe.

At last I was thankfully clawing my way on to the bank. Squatting by Bill, I turned to see how David was getting on. Then, for one horrible moment, I thought he must have lost his hold and dropped into the depths. Nobody straddled the tree. Nobody stood on the other bank.

"Bill!" I cried, and clutched his shoulder.

That calm face swung round. "Now, wheer's he at? He must have jibbed at it, and gone higher up. He'll be among them hummocks

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE DITTON

by
DUDLEY
HOYS

Black Ghyll at night was no place for a man too timid to take a chance—even with death on one side and Dinah on the other . . .

David lay far below us—a lonely, helpless figure under the outcrop. Dinah called his name, but there was no answer

GILBERT HARDING

This is how to stay HAPPY

DOCTORS tell us that the people who most often suffer from breakdowns are those whose lives have been friendless and lonely.

Everybody needs friends. Some people need them so desperately that they will even buy books which purport to tell them how to make friends. I am quite sure that friends made with the same deliberation as you might set out to catch a fish cannot be very real, permanent or satisfactory.

Friends just happen. One of the finest friendships I know of started over a cup of coffee. After several months in Canada a young English accountant was out of work. His wife had left him and gone back to England. He had only a few dollars left.

He was having a cup of coffee in a Toronto restaurant when a stranger noticed his miserable appearance and spoke to him. The young man poured out the whole story. Then the stranger took him home, introduced him to his wife, and they talked over his problems.

The upshot was that the stranger, a car salesman, gave the young man enough money to go back to England to attempt a reconciliation with his wife, money for both of them to return to Canada, and found him a job with a firm of accountants.

After the fight . . .

Sometimes friends are the result of a long acquaintance; and sometimes a friendship persists in spite of it. A great friendship can start as a result of a terrible quarrel later composed, or as a result of a kindly act, but more often it is quite impossible to put your finger on any incident or occasion which started a friendship.

In my experience it is the man who is ready to trust others who makes friends easily, and the suspicious man who is left alone.

A lot more can be said about how to lose friends than how to make them. It is just as important to be polite and considerate towards your friends as it is towards anyone else.

Like everything else from which we expect a lot, friendship demands that we give something, and one of the things that quickly ruins a friendship is careless or rude treatment of a friend. The man who borrows things from a friend without his knowledge, saying, "Old so-and-so won't mind," is placing a dangerous strain on friendship.

The person who boasts of his many friends is usually referring to a wide acquaintance. The older you get the fewer are your friends, and the more valuable. They can be silent when you want to talk yourself; they can help you when you are ill or handicapped; and when you are depressed they can listen to your troubles and cheer you up.

I have friends whom I have seen only half a dozen times in my life. There are others I see almost every day—but there are few friends that can pass this test for long.

Most marriages that come to grief do so because the essential thing in marriage is friendship. It is much more important than physical attraction or material advantage, and it is much more difficult to keep on good terms with someone you see every day than with the people you get a rest from.

The great mistake is ever to take your friends for granted. The quickly started and intense friendships of childhood do not often survive, but when they do we have to realize that as we get older we get more, not less, sensitive.

We don't always want our friends to give us their candid opinion, especially when we have not asked for it. Two boys I knew at school remained firm friends as they grew up. In their late twenties they both emigrated to America, and shared a flat. One day one said he would like a fried herring for breakfast, and the other, who was proud of his cooking ability, said he would prepare it. His friend did not think much of the way it was done and said so.

That was the end of their friendship. The insulted cook walked out of the house, and they have never seen each other since.

Few things are harder to swallow than the kind of advice which follows the "I just want to help you" or "It's for your own good" approach. To my mind, one of the sure ways of losing friends is by trying to influence people. It's a more certain danger to friendship than borrowing or lending money, which is only safe when it doesn't matter whether the money is paid back or not, or when the friendship has reached such a stage that there is perfect understanding.

Dumb friends!

Some friendships flourish because of a community of interests, and the parties write to one another about music, poetry, model railways, gardening, or what have you. On the other hand there are great friendships between people who have practically no interests in common. A solicitor may have a great friend who is a motor mechanic. The one knows nothing at all about big ends and magnetos, the other nothing about contracts and conveyances, but they can play golf together, or fish, or play cards, or perhaps just have a drink, and each is refreshed by the other's silence.

Every week we read about people who have experienced great good luck. Good fortune is something which comes to crooks as well as to saints, and whether deserved or not.

One thing you can never get without deserving it, and without doing something to keep it, is friendship; and once lost, nothing is harder to recapture. THE END

Edge of fear

continued from page 4

somewhere, making for the shallow crossing at the top. I'll give him a yell." He gave the high-pitched call of a hill shepherd.

To our amazement, an answering call reached us, not from above, but from the ghyll below, and it was not so much a call as a scream.

We leaped up. Something was slithering down that stone chute.

It was easy to guess what had happened. Scared stiff of crossing the tree, David had gone down to the wider section with the idea of tackling that stone slide. From his bank it had seemed a possibility. But from ours it was an obvious death-trap, for the chute ended abruptly by the projecting hummock, and below that was sheer rock-face, with, here and there, the stems of miniature, stunted trees growing outwards.

David was sliding, skidding, snatching frantically at the loose stone. Nothing could stop him from hurtling over the edge. But he gave a wild twist and somehow rolled against the curve of the hummock. From there he crawled across the back of the curve.

Bill gave an urgent shout. "Stop!"

It was no use. Probably the lad never heard him. The figure crept on, only to start sliding again.

I thought it was the end. But once more his frenzied snatching found something to grip—bilberry roots. His feet dug into another tuft. Now he was clinging like a fly beneath the overhang of the hummock, with a sheer drop of at least sixty feet below him.

I said hoarsely: "God knows how we can save him."

Bill's words came slowly and unemotionally. "It would need a hundred foot of rope, lowered from up above him. Even then the overhang would push it out beyond his reach. Yon's his way. See? If he'd let hisself drop, he could grab a tree stem, and keep on grabbing and lowering, gradual like."

I wiped the cold sweat from my face. "You might. You would. But he. . . ."

"Aye," he said soberly. "That's so. He's his own enemy, poor chap." He paused, and went on: "I'll bide here, encouraging. You make for Iredale."

I GOT to Skaldermains in forty minutes. All the way I kept imagining those numbed fingers failing.

Dinah opened the door. I told her the truth in quick sentences.

"We've rope," she said, "and father's back home. We'll go ahead while you collect a rescue squad."

John Foster appeared from the kitchen, his face strained and pitying.

"Aye," he said, "I heard. I'll phone the rescue squad. It'll take them time to round up men and gear."

While he talked into the phone, Dinah was pulling on a pair of nailed boots. Nib, the terrier, scuttled around her legs and whined.

Foster reappeared. I said: "Ready?"

"Aye." We went across to the barn. There we picked up all the rope we could find, two lengths of about fifty feet apiece, and wound them about our waists. It was only as we hurried up the slope at the back of the farmhouse, Dinah leading, that we realized the terrier was trotting at our heels.

"Nay matter," said Foster. "He'll not be in way."

I doubt we said another dozen words on our pressing clamber up to Black Ghyll. Now and again cloud veiled the moon, and we switched on our torches, and trod fast over scree and boulders, across mossy hollows and up staircases of rock.

Once, by accident, I shone my torch on Dinah's face. Anxiety was there, and a kind of mute prayer. But above all her face showed control.

The moon was at its brightest as the ridge-bank of Black Ghyll loomed up against the dark lilac of the night sky. A shadow stirred among boulders, and it was Bill Mardon. John Foster managed to put the question we were afraid to ask.

"Is he . . . ?"

"Yonder still. Look."

David was still there, beneath the overhang. Dinah called his name, and there was no answer.

Bill said: "Reckon he's nearly fettled. Earlier on, by shouting and shouting, I got a few words out of him. But this last half hour. . . ." He shook his head. "The sinews and blood of him'll be failing."

Dinah called out again, her voice imploring yet steady. There was no reply, although I thought he stirred. The terrier began to yelp.

John Foster was studying the fall of bank above the overhang.

"At least a hundred feet," he said. "And then that rock jutting out."

I said: "We need twice as much rope. The only way I see it is for a man to be lowered, with a second rope dangling by. If he could swing in to David, and lash it to the lad. . . ."

"That means waiting for the rescue squad. Another hour, perhaps more."

Dinah's control wavered. "While we do nothing?"

"Lass," said her father gently, "is there anything we can do? Tell me."

BILL had lit another pipe. "The only one who could help him is hisself. Aye," he went on, and for the first time his tone had a tremor of pity. "Look yonder, Dinah, how them trees lead down the rock-face. I bawled at him to drop and grab. He could do it yet, if only he. . . ." His voice tailed away.

The terrier had stopped yelping. That ought to have warned us. Too late we realized the reason. There was a tinkling and a scraping. Low-slung, agile, with the claws of a cat, Nib had gone over the edge. Rock flakes, pads of heather, cushions of moss, gave her footings. Half-crawling, half-slipping, she was heading for the bottom of the ravine. Our torches followed her. . . .

She reached the bed, splashed through the water, tried three times to get up the other side. The third attempt took her at a slant up a narrow crack, and she wriggled towards David.

Within a yard of the overhang, slimy rock betrayed her. She scrabbled, failed, pitched off. Fifteen feet below, her resilient little body landed in the fork of a rowan. There, trapped above nothingness, she started to whimper.

I heard the catch in Dinah's breathing. I heard Foster groan and mutter: "They'll die near together."

The whimpering was terrible. Even Bill murmured: "Poor little beggar."

And then came the unbelievable. The clinging, stilly figure of David began to move. A white blur that was his face turned and stared downwards, at the trapped terrier. The fear that had prevented him from saving himself was forgotten. He meant to save his dog. He let go, dropped, flung out his hands at the trees rushing up to him.

He was swinging by a stem from both arms. He was letting himself down to another. A rowan sagged under his weight, and he stretched lower, lower, grabbed the terrier by the back of her neck. He put her inside his buttoned jacket. Then he was swinging and clutching again from tree to tree.

OUR silence was broken by Bill's triumphant roar. "Tha's done it, lad! Keep to bed of gully. Work down to Rowan beck. We'll be there."

We ran, and Dinah was crying at last. By the junction of the Rowan beck we swung into the foot of the ghyll and started up it, yelling his name as if we had gone mad—and, indeed, I vow we had for the while, even Bill.

David appeared limping around a bend of those lofty, forbidding walls. Dinah splashed ahead of us. I stopped her father and Bill.

"Look the other way," I said. "They'll not want us. . . ." THE END

© *Dudley Hoys, 1960*

'I've a flat, a Bentley . . . a good life'

'You get involved with people, you know'

Why no woman will marry ALAN WHICKER

by René Lecler

IN just under three years, the B.B.C.'s television programme *Tonight* has become a power in the land.

Five nights a week, more often than any other programme except the news, it presents a picture of Britain which few people can resist: a nation with a sense of humour, delightful prejudices . . . sound, right-thinking people who are amazingly articulate, film stars who act like film stars, crackpots so cracked that they would be hard to invent and a flood of celebrities who have something to say.

And every night, seven and a half millions of us watch it with amused *bonhomie*.

Tonight has also given the country one Member of Parliament, Geoffrey Johnson Smith, and the prototype of all television "uncles"—Cliff Michelmore. It has also nurtured the small screen's best special correspondent, Alan Whicker, a veteran of four hundred television interviews and two round-the-world trips.

Questions about Whicker come easily. Most people want to know, "How does he do it?" Women want to know, "Why isn't he married?" and most men want to know, "How the dickens did he get such a wonderful life?"

The answers are, in this order: "Jolly hard work," "No wife would put up with my timetable," and "If they think it's wonderful, just let them take a closer look. . . ."

There is a good deal more than this to Mr. Whicker. He has a flat near Richmond Green, but he more or less lives, when he is in Britain, in the tiny backroom of a small brick house lost in the drab byways at the back of the B.B.C.'s Lime Grove Studios. He sits restlessly behind his desk, his head quizzically cocked to one side, and his hands work as he talks, white, beautifully manicured hands of which he is obviously, though perhaps unconsciously, proud.

We were discussing the sort of image he tries to put across to viewers. "It seems," I said, "to work out as an average man's attitude of curiosity, slight disbelief and a small chip on the shoulder. You are not easily impressed and can be a bit 'narky.' Is that right?"

"There is no chip on the shoulder to start with," said Whicker, hands working gently. "I certainly ask the kind of question which the average viewer would ask, but I am trying to do it before he thinks of it. What we are trying to put over on *Tonight* isn't so much interviewing as conversation. Facts are useful, but the flavour of people is much more important.

"If you are talking to the chairman of the local housing committee and he is being a bit pompous and silly, then you'd say: 'A lot of people might think you're being a bit silly. . . .' If a man is naturally pompous, I don't mind this coming across. I have discovered that you can get almost anything across on television except boredom. You can't get a bore across. To show himself as a bore, he's got to go on and on and time is one thing you haven't got. But you can show self-importance, humility, niceness, superiority, impatience, offensiveness and so on."

I said: "You once said that on television you no longer put people up against the wall and kick them. Even so, when you've got a big boy, like a mayor, for instance, you do bowl him

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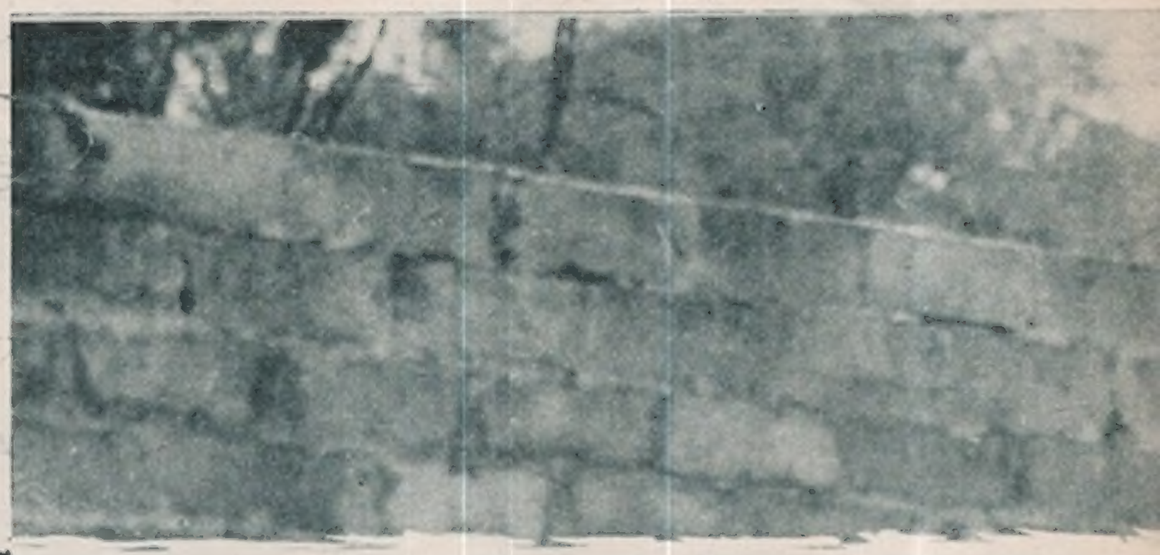
Whicker believes in letting people talk. On overseas trips he travels light—with only two assistants

Crocodile Trader · 2

by Bill Sutherland

as told to Rory Macaulay



KILLERS — eating out of

THIS was the critical moment. Our first live crocodile, its jaws bound with rope, sacking thrown over its eyes to keep it blindfolded, and its huge, repulsive-looking body tied to the ground by wire cable, lay in the snare on the river-bank where we'd caught it.

The next step was to get it back to camp—and this could only be done by carrying it to our waiting boat.

The whole idea filled me and my fellow-hunter, Graham Hall, with horror. We already knew that crocs must be treated with the greatest respect. Originally we'd set off up the Zambesi to shoot them for their skins, with which to earn some badly needed money.

But in January, 1957, along had come a bustling American, Arthur Jones, who'd hired us for something that had never been known before—capturing crocs alive to send to the States.

It sounded crazy, quite apart from the dangers of handling crocodiles. The Zambesi was about to flood, and Jones refused to heed our warnings of the havoc that would cause.

However, he was willing to take us home with him, back to the U.S.A., the land of opportunity. How could two hard-up Rhodesians refuse?

Jones looked at the captured croc speculatively. "I guess we're too few," he said. "I like three men on each side of a croc this size. Say, Graham, nip to camp and fetch some boys."

No sooner was Graham on his way than Jones sat down beside the crocodile and began to snip the cable. "Hadn't you best wait until they return?" I suggested.

"Nope. No need. No crocodile'll move when blindfolded." Severing the last strand of wire he gave the inert body a dig with his boot. Not a movement from the crocodile. Astonished beyond speech I sat down and lit a cigarette. For once Jones permitted me to enjoy a smoke in comfort.

'Never let go'

However, no sooner had Graham returned with reinforcements than all was action again. Two boys were ordered on to the loose end of the rope binding the croc's jaws. "And now, fellas, you've gotten hold on. Got that? Never let go," Jones warned.

The rest of us lined up, three on either side of the body. "Slip your hands under, and lock fingers with your opposite number," was the next order.

The rope-boys levered the body up and, locking hands underneath, we lifted.

"Remember now, whatever happens hold on. Nobody'll get hurt unless they let go, giving him room to get power behind the lash," shouted Jones. Nodding grimly we took a first step towards the water.

Next moment we were on the ground, the crocodile wriggling and twisting in our grip, but we held on, all of us save the two end boys. Squealing, they released the tail and leaped for safety—but not quickly enough; not quickly enough by half. A lash left, another right, and two moaning boys lay huddled on the ground. There was a piston-like rhythm to that tail.

"The clots. The stupid clots!" howled Jones, wasting scant sympathy on the winded boys. Crooning softly he tickled the bloated belly of the reptile and, once it had quietened down, the whole operation started over again.

Murder in its tail

This time the boys held on with a will. Even their limited intelligence had grasped the fact that it was the only thing to do. The crocodile contested every inch of ground. But we made it.

Grouped around the boat, we began to lower it carefully aboard, to an accompaniment of exhortations from Jones.

"Don't let go. A blow from that tail, or the muscle and bone-encased skull, sure means broken heads, and there ain't no doctor handy."

We got the brute aboard without trouble, but as soon as we relaxed our holds it started to perform all over again. Crash, smack, smack, thud, went the tail. Here goes the boat, I thought, but had bargained without the indomitable Jones.

Doing a flying rugger tackle he landed on the reptile's back, wrapped his arms around the hideous carcass, and held on for dear life. The crocodile subsided and lay still.

Jones rose shakily, pulled out his glasses, fixed them on his nose and wiped his dripping brow. Then we crowded into the boat, even sitting on the unprotesting crocodile, and chugged down lake, locating three more crocodiles captured in snares.

"Reckon we'll have to make a trip for each," said Jones, holding the bow firmly pointed towards our camp.

Hardly pausing to eat a meal, we returned to the fray, and night was falling before all four captives were safely dumped at camp. As we landed the last, a pleasing aroma of stewing duck tickled our nostrils.

"We'd best fix the catch right now, and feed afterwards," said Jones. The man was devoid of any finer feelings—a virtual slave driver!

Pursing his lips he thought for a moment. Then: "Let's tether them to trees," he suggested, and immediately set to work. He told us that, until the larger boat arrived, all operations must cease. A small pond had to be built, here at our lake-side camp, with a stockade around it. In this the daily catch would be kept for transporting down-river once a week to the main pond, which was under construction near Livingstone, on the land of a farmer named Krantz.

Next morning when Graham and I set out to examine the snares we found one croc that looked all of thirteen feet, and several others that were around the ten- to eleven-foot mark. We regarded these massive brutes with misgivings, but had no Jones to help us.

All went well until we tackled the thirteen-footer — several hundred pounds of very live croc. It was roped without trouble and carried down to the barge.

Broke our grip

The fun started as soon as the brute smelt water. In a desperate attempt to reach its native element it thrashed and struggled with head and tail. Its strength was prodigious and finally our grip on the head was broken. As the head went down so the tail came up, also breaking free.

The first lash caught me full on the chest. My initial reaction was surprise. There was no pain; just a dull, numbing sensation, as if of being hit by a boxing-glove—with the fist of the world heavyweight champion behind it.

The next thing registered was that I was under water. Instinctively I held my breath but on surfacing found that I was still choking.

I lunged for the barge, gasping for air, now realizing I was winded.

Graham hauled me aboard, but even

our hands

We watched, fascinated, as Jones dangled meat inches from those terrible jaws. Then to our horror we realized it was our turn next . . .

lying on the barge deck I found difficulty in breathing, and began to wonder if a rib or two had been crushed. Graham knelt down and rendered first aid, and in a few minutes I felt better. Nothing was broken, but for days there was a great blue weal across my chest to remind me not to take any chances with crocodiles.

When I had recovered we got the big fellow aboard and stowed without any more trouble and returned to camp. Jones, naturally, was delighted; more so when we covered the thirteen-footer with sacks and challenged him to state its length by examination of the head. Carefully he measured the head, made a calculation and stated: "Thirteen foot, to an inch or two either way."

A tape measure disclosed the length as thirteen feet two inches! How the deuce did he do it?

To my plea to be told this secret he answered obliquely: "In most animals head and body have a strict relationship, except in man, where there are too many fat heads about."

I did not pursue the topic further. . . .

"Three-thirty. A nice morning, temperature forty-six degrees Fahrenheit," called Jones. We fumbled into

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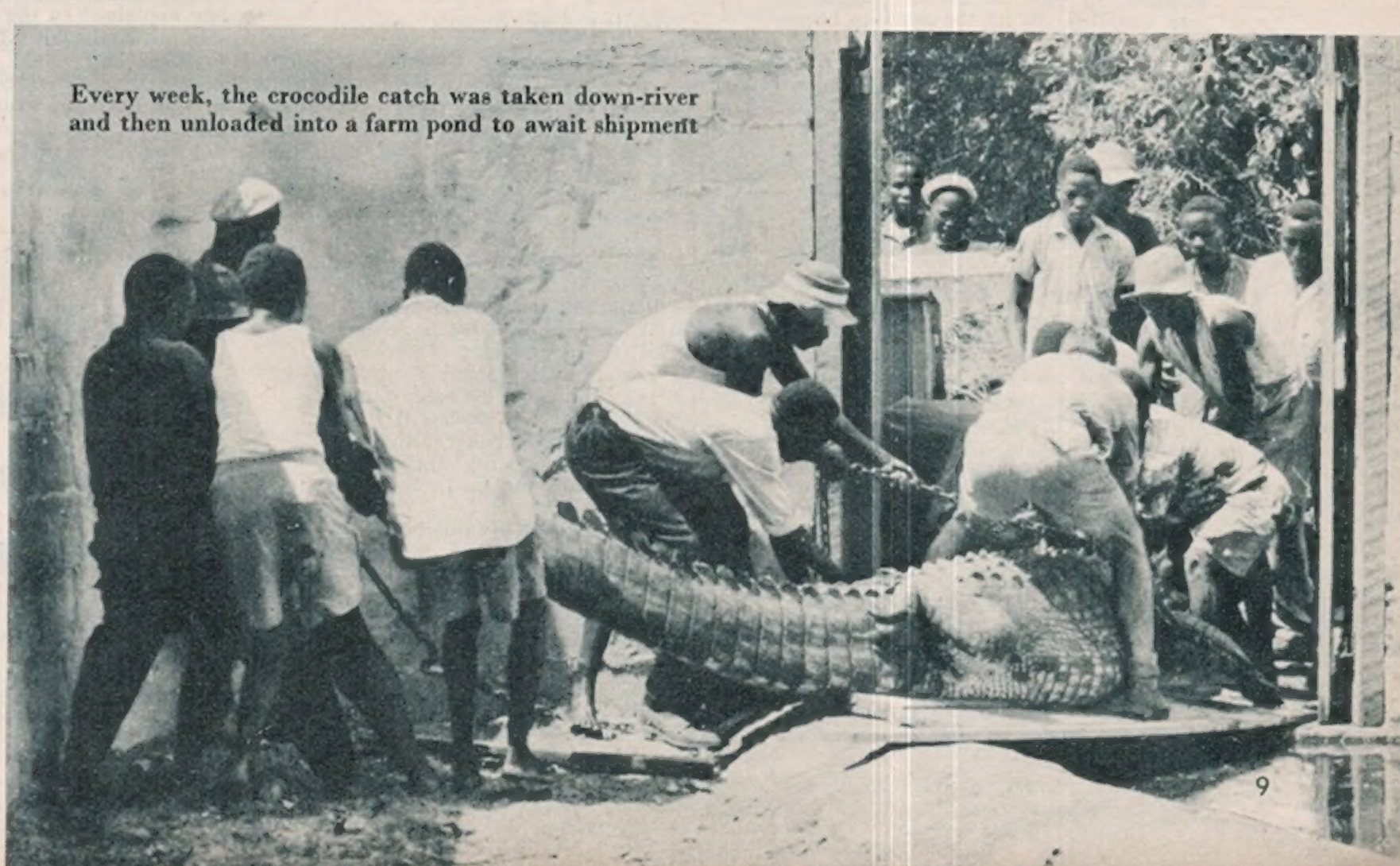
Every week, the crocodile catch was taken down-river and then unloaded into a farm pond to await shipment



The Mafia deals in vice, dope and murder. Often the innocent pay...

Death of a beautiful

THE dazzling blonde sat back, confident and happy, as the large black car cruised through the quiet twilight streets of New York. She was Janice Drake, a thirty-two year old ex-beauty queen. She wore an expensive cocktail dress and a mink stole.

Janice Drake was married to a television comedian, but it was not her husband who was taking her out that night. At the wheel was Anthony Carfano, known in underworld circles as "Little Augie" Pisano, a sixty-year-old racketeer who once worked for Al Capone.

Shots rang out

It was to be a fatal journey for them both. As the car suddenly swerved into the kerb, bystanders heard a fusillade of shots. Two men jumped from the back of the car and ran off.

Carfano had been a leading figure in the Mafia—the secret society originating in Sicily which has spread to the United States and is responsible for organized racketeering on a grand scale. He owned a racing stable and a large mansion on Long Beach. Since 1916 he had been arrested nine times, mostly on murder charges, but had never been convicted.

Detectives investigating his killing knew that it was a Mafia act of revenge. No doubt "Little Augie" had broken the society's rules. But how? Probably they will never know. For in their determined efforts to penetrate the society's tightly-knit organization of racketeers who specialize in every form of criminal activity, the United States police forces are hamstrung by the Mafia's law of silence—*omerta*.

The Mafia is also reported to be behind the slaying in Chicago of Roger (The Terrible) Touhy just before Christmas. Touhy, once a Capone henchman, had just been released from prison after twenty-six years.

He was said to be preparing to build a rival crime organization in Chicago—but the Mafia dislikes competition and Touhy was shot by two men as he stepped out of a car. His bodyguard was wounded. So far the assassins have not been caught.

The Mafia—which was recently said to have set up a London branch in Clerkenwell, to assist illegal Italian immigrants—is an old society. Yet the U.S. is waking up only now to the fact that it forms the hard core of organized crime which costs the country billions of dollars annually and lures its youth into vice and drugs addiction.

Fear of slander

This awakening has been delayed by the reluctance of the United States Government to say anything which might reflect on the hundreds of thousands of honest Americans of Sicilian birth or ancestry.

But Harry Anslinger, commissioner of the Treasury Department's Bureau of Narcotics, reported in October, 1958: "We are engaged in a war against an army of subtle and defiant men whose power and wickedness have grown steadily during the last decade. The core of this army are the Mafiosi. Like the Communists, they have discipline, cohesion and a philosophy."

The activities of the Mafia "dons"—the gang chiefs—have become increasingly bolder during the last few years. Anthony "Fat Tony" Salerno, known to the Miami Crime Commission as "a Sicilian underworld character with jukebox connections in New York," has been named by the New York police as the mysterious figure behind the Floyd Patterson-Ingemar Johansson world title fight; but no word of his present whereabouts has leaked out.

Bullet for Frank

In May, 1957, Frank Costello, a member of the top echelon of the New York underworld, was entering his apartment building when a heavily-built man who had followed him in announced: "This is for you, Frank." As Costello wheeled round a .38 bullet ripped through his hat and seared his scalp.

The bullet holes in his hat and the wound itself showed beyond any doubt that the bullet entered from the front, but Costello insisted that his back had been turned to his assailant. In court, when he was asked to identify the man who had been charged with attempting to murder him, Costello protested that he had never seen his attacker, although he must have been looking straight at him when the shot was fired. Such is the law of the Mafia.

It wasn't until November, 1957, when police walked in on a Mafia "grand council" meeting at Apalachin, N.Y., that the full scope of the organization's activities became known. The sixty-three "dons" in attendance came from Italy, Cuba and all parts of the U.S.A.

Among them was John Montana, of Buffalo, a silver-haired, elegant city councillor who owned a fleet of taxi-cabs and was known as a philanthropist in his home town. When the police raided the meeting, which was held at the palatial country home of Joseph Barbara, a soft-drink distributor, they found Montana in the woods nearby, his expensive camel-hair coat caught in a barbed-wire fence.

After they untangled him, Montana courteously explained to the policemen that it was all a mistake. The brakes of his Cadillac had acted peculiarly while he was driving to New York. Recalling that Barbara, who was just an acquaintance and "not a close friend," owned a fleet of Cadillacs, he had stopped there to ask for assistance. Montana, who was born in Sicily in 1895, was surprised, of course, to find so many men there.

The Apalachin meeting served to get the name of Mafia before the public, convince the sceptical that it was more than a figment of the imagination and harden the resolve of the government to do something about it.

Although there are conflicting theories about Mafia's origin, the one most commonly accepted is that it was born in Sicily in the mid-eighteenth century as a underground movement against Austrian, French and Spanish rulers.

There were five principal rules. A Mafioso, or member of the sect, was bound to come to the aid of a brother-member in trouble with every means at

They're silent killers in grey flannel suits, Mafia bosses whose only law is their own grim code. Now HARRY J. O'DELL tells of their new reign of terror

Her only crime was to ride in a racketeer's car—but Mafia bullets brought death to lovely Janice Drake. Left, police find her body; below, as she won a beauty contest

woman

his command. He must obey implicitly the orders of a council of brothers senior to him. He must consider any offence by an outsider as an offence against the entire brotherhood and be ready to avenge it at any cost. He must never, under any circumstances, appeal to the police, the courts, or any government authority for redress.

Eternal silence

He must never admit the existence of the brotherhood, discuss its activities, or reveal the name of a brother.

This code of self-sufficiency, silence and vendetta is as valid now as it was then.

The invasion of America by the Mafia began in the 1880s, during the great tide of Italian immigration. By this time it had become a secret society of criminals whose motives were far removed from their patriotic origins.

Italian immigrants were confused by the customs and language of their new land and tended to huddle together in the Little Italys of the big cities, such as Chicago and New York. Here they became easy prey for the Mafia extortionists in their midst. The trickle of Mafia adherents into the United States rapidly swelled.

Despite periodic outbreaks of terrorism, the organization didn't gain a firm foothold in American life until the national prohibition of liquor in 1920. The prohibition laws were responsible for fourteen years of lawlessness and corruption from which the United States has never fully recovered. It was a situation which might have been specially designed to be exploited by the shrewd money-and-power hungry members of the Mafia.

In the late twenties, when Al Capone was undisputed boss of the Chicago racketeers, the system under which Mafia operates a national network of crime was built up. Capone, although his Neapolitan birth disqualified him from becoming a member of the high council of the Mafia, was an organizing genius.

He apportioned territory, developed specialists in particular lines of vice and set up a system of interlocking gangs which helped instead of fighting each other. If New York needed a pair of assassins unknown to the police or local gangsters, they could be imported from Chicago or Los Angeles. If one territory became too hot for a Mafioso, he could be transferred to another area.

The crime syndicate, with the Mafia as its core, still operates along the lines laid down by Capone. With the repeal of prohibition it has extended its operations deeply into the drug traffic, labour racketeering, slot machines and gambling.

But in the postwar years it began to invest in legitimate business, particularly where that business could be useful to crime. A man who legitimately imports goods from abroad in his own vessels has a much easier time smuggling heroin into the country.

The expansion of the Mafia in America from a handful of thugs to the brains behind a powerful, nationwide syndicate of criminals, owes much to its closely integrated "family" organization which has survived from the earliest days and the ruthlessness of the punishment handed out to those who break its laws.

Albert Anastasia, former head of "Murder Incorporated," tried to expand his dock and numbers rackets into the Havana gambling empire of a brother Mafioso, despite persistent warnings from the brotherhood.

Barber shop murder

On October 23, 1957, he paid a visit to the barber's shop in New York's Park-Sheraton hotel. As he sat in the chair bullets smashed through the window. Anastasia slid to the floor, "executed" for breaking the sacred code of *omerta*.

Recently the U.S. Justice Department drew up a secret list of the hundred racketeers and vice lords it most wants to send to prison. The Narcotics Bureau, the Federal Bureau of Investigation—all the governmental enforcement agencies—are co-operating in a supreme effort to end the crime careers of these men.

The intention is to get court-proof evidence of crime—any crime—against them.

Although the list is secret it would not be surprising to find that most—if not all—of them are members of the Mafia.

The effort may seem small when weighed against the entrenched power of the Mafia interests. But Al Capone, who once ran Chicago as his own feudal domain, was jailed on evidence that he had failed to pay income tax.

Perhaps the Mafia, too, has an Achilles heel. THE END

Hero looked at the photograph for a long time. "This house," Meg said, "is filled with some quite horrible people"

PAUL GALLICO'S

It was tantalizing. Who was the figure in the cowl? Meg had guessed but dare not tell Hero now

latest romantic thriller TOO MANY GHOSTS

PORTRAIT OF A PHANTOM

GERALDINE TAYLOR gazed down at the Tarot cards. A moment before she had been stumbling through a weary fortune-telling routine. But now the curtains of time had drawn apart. Other minds were speaking with her voice. And what was said struck terror into Alexander Hero. . . .

Already Hero had laid two "ghosts" at Paradine Hall. The furniture had moved in Isobel Paradine's room, he discovered, because exceptional tides had shaken the foundations. And an unhappy child had been the poltergeist of the country club in the east wing. . . . But who was the Paradine nun, night-walking with disfiguring acid? And that harp playing with no one near it—who, or what, lay behind that mystery?

Clearly, Susan Marshall, the American friend of young Beth Paradine, was the nun's intended victim. It was outside her room that Hero had found the acid splotch. But why this fiendish malevolence against her?

True, she was at the centre of a turmoil of human feeling. Two men loved her, Hero reckoned—Mark Paradine and Sir Richard Lockerie. And Beth Paradine was pining for Richard. Then there was Lady Paradine, Mark's mother quite obviously, she resented her son's interest in Susan. Just as she resented that her sister-in-law Isobel was mistress of the Hall in all but name.

Something terrible might happen at any moment. Hero had to act. But all he had to go on was a photograph of the nun from a camera set by his stepsister, Meg. It showed little—except that the nun was no spirit but flesh-and-blood evil.

And now Mrs. Taylor was speaking. Hatred threatened a young girl—yes, Hero knew that. But there was worse to hear. The other voice of Geraldine Taylor was telling of a holocaust of fire, flames lighting the ruin of Paradine Hall.

PART SEVEN

TEA with the Paradines that afternoon seemed a monstrous mockery of banal politeness overlaying fearful and secret tensions. *Or do I alone feel this?* Hero thought to himself. *Am I the only one who sees death and destruction beneath this English ceremony?*

He glanced across at Lady Paradine and wondered what lay behind that mask of indolence and boredom. Would a woman who had found that she was not mistress of her house go so far as to pull it down about her ears? And what about the attacks on Susan Marshall?

Across the room Susan and Mark were chatting. There was no question but that young Paradine was in love and that his mother knew it. It was Susan Marshall who was the great uncommitted in the household—Susan Marshall the undecided; Susan the cool, controlled one; Susan the flirt; Susan the unpopular American.

Most American girls were thought to be title-hunters. Was this reason enough for Lady Paradine to try to frighten her from Paradine Hall? But what about the death and immolation that Mrs. Taylor had seen while she read the Tarot cards? Was this bored, handsome woman a murderess as well?

And what had gone wrong with Sir Richard Lockerie? He was no longer in command of himself, but nervous, uneasy and, Hero would have said, almost with a sense of guilt about him. He was by the window talking with Meg, but from the quality of his voice alone Hero was aware that his mind was not on it. What had happened? Had Susan Marshall turned him down?

Beth was sitting with Cousin Freddie; and she too was in a state of tension. Hero saw how pale she was and then a moment later flushed. He caught her stealing a glance at Sir Richard with his stepsister. *Oh Lord,* he said to himself, *is she pining away for her Uncle Dick?*

He tried to remember something Meg had told him. What was it she had said? *Isobel was once supposed to be in love with Sir Richard, or he with her, but he went off to the war and married some French girl and that put an end to that.*

Hero looked with new eyes upon these three. Could it be possible? A half generation, as it were—two women of the Paradine clan, aunt and niece—each at one time in love with the same man; a widower, still handsome and virile, and now in love with another? Was this why the terror, the danger and the still untrapped ghosts swirled about the head of Susan Marshall? Was she the key to the riddle? Would her departure from Paradine Hall lay these ghosts once and for all—and, with it, whose heart would be broken?

Sir Richard was saying to Meg: "Clever of your brother to have hit upon that tidal explanation." He then turned to Hero. "I suppose that is the answer to most ghost stuff, what?"

Lord Paradine looked up and said: "Naturally. Always an explanation. Never believed in this ghost stuff myself."

"Not much you don't, Unkie," Freddie sneered. "You've had the wind up like everybody else." The unpleasant young man turned to Hero suddenly and said: "I say, Hero, do you realize that if the curse does its biz I'm the next Paradine heir?" He laughed loudly. "Susan, old girl," he said, "if that happens you'll have to marry me if you want to be Lady Paradine."

FOR a moment there was shocked silence; then Susan said mockingly: "Oh, Freddie, would you? I never knew you cared."

Isobel said in her soft and sweetly modulated voice: "Freddie dear, I wonder if I ought not to pour tea down your neck instead of into your cup?"

"Dear Auntie," Freddie said, "one can see why all the eligibles declined and you never married."

Paradine said: "Well, dammit, it did make one just a little uncomfortable. But that's all over now, thanks to Hero here. . . ."

"What's all over?" Freddie said. "What about the nun and the harp and all the rest?"

"Perhaps you could tell us something about it, Freddie." Lady Paradine spoke so little and she took such small part in what was going on about her that when she did it came as a shock.

"What do you mean?" Freddie said. For the first time Hero thought he saw signs of fluster on his fat, disagreeable face.

Lady Paradine turned her still beautiful eyes on her husband's nephew. "Why, you said yourself that if something happened to us you are the next Paradine heir. You wouldn't be gliding about the house inside a nun's robe and playing a harp, trying to frighten us all to death, would you, Freddie? It would be so like you."

"Oh! But, Lady Paradine," Susan Marshall said. "I'm sure that Freddie wouldn't——"

Whatever else she had been about to say was cut short by Lady Paradine's gesture of turning to her—so gentle, so firm, so kindly.

"My dear," said Lady Paradine ever so softly, "it's a family matter."

For the first time since he had known her, Hero saw the American girl truly disconcerted. Quietly and without saying a word she left the room. Mark got up and went after her.

"Mark," his mother called softly, "do sit

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ILLUSTRATED BY ZELINSKI

"I have here six prints. What am I bid?" Auctioneer Wilks puts up Lot 256 and battle starts. Dealers—"you can always spot them"—bid shrewdly; casuals

MAKE ME AN OFFER

by Anthony Wilks

FROM the rostrum of my saleroom in Chelmsford I glanced down at the next lot on the catalogue: a pair of utility beds. They were reasonably attractive, but a bit out of date. So I didn't expect them to make much.

"Who'll give me a fiver?" I asked optimistically. Soon the bidding was under way.

At £10 the dealers dropped out, leaving the bidding to two young housewives.

Both were fired with the spirit of battle—I could see it in their eyes. As the bidding went past £15 the dealers began to exchange looks of pity. At £26 one of the women mercifully gave up and the other stepped forward to claim her "prize." She had paid at least £5 more for the beds than they would have cost brand-new in a shop.

Frightened to bid

Her error was due to over-enthusiasm and lack of experience. The fear of being similarly "caught" leads many people—particularly younger people—to stay away from furniture auctions. They will gladly order furniture on hire-purchase and pay interest on it, or scramble at a store for products marked down a few shillings; but take their chance in a saleroom—never.

Yet every week, at thousands of public furniture auctions all over Britain, people who have taken the trouble to learn the ropes take away valuable household effects at prices well below true market values.

The essential quality is patience. I would advise any novice to attend a first sale without buying, simply to get accustomed to prices. When bidding, decide on a top price, and stick to it. If you don't secure the item, quite likely you will find a better example at another sale—and get it for less.

Prices tend to vary for similar articles, but the saleroom porter, or the auctioneer, will be able to tell you what any item "ought" to fetch.

The shrewdest judges of second-hand goods are the professional dealers who appear at every auction. Most of them know the market to a shilling. But dealers have one disadvantage. They must resell goods at a profit.

This means that the private buyer may safely make two or three bids after the last dealer has dropped out, and still be sure of a bargain. Some dealers—the big beefy men wearing ancient leather jerkins, who sprawl against the furniture and make their bids merely by staring hard at the auctioneer—are easy to identify. There are others who travel up from London overnight wearing Savile Row suits and bowler hats. Yet all dealers in my experience can be identified by their air of confidence.

The worst, and most common, mistake made by inexperienced buyers is failure to inspect goods before bidding. At a recent auction a woman who bought a chest of drawers found that it was defective after I'd sold it to her.

"No reputable auctioneer would sell a thing in that condition," she shouted.

Anything goes . . .

But she was wrong. An auctioneer will accept for sale anything which might reasonably be expected to fetch a price. Any defects known to the auctioneer will always be pointed out—but inevitably there are some which get by. Each item is available for public scrutiny on the day before the sale.

New articles—such as those which come from bankrupt stocks—often

timidly. "Ten bob, thank you; fifteen . . . seventeen and six (*is she bidding against herself?*) . . . a pound. And two and six. Any more? Going, then . . . gone"

realize more than their value in the shops. Few people seem to have much idea of current retail prices.

Once I sold the grocery stock of a restaurant which had gone out of business. The lots, which were made up by weight, were eagerly sought after by housewives who scented a bargain. I found that most items—currants, oranges, sugar—had sold at prices well above those at the nearest grocer's.

Bargain tactics

The auctioneer himself can be badly adrift in his valuation. Not long ago I was selling an old table. The pedestal had broken away from the top and the pieces seemed badly matched.

"Who'll start me off at a pound?" I asked.

"Twenty," offered a dealer.

"Shillings?" I inquired.

"No, pounds, guv'nor," he replied.

After spirited bidding, the table, which turned out to be a fine period piece, went for £60.

How to bid, and when, can be quite important in securing a bargain.

Hesitation is fatal—it encourages the opposition. Sometimes a determined bidder will start with a high offer to scare off other potential buyers.

Another gambit is the "jump bid." This occurs as the auctioneer is going up slowly by half a crown at a time. Suddenly one bidder will jump up the bidding by ten shillings. This often demoralizes rivals.

There is no recognized method of making a bid. Most people wave a catalogue. Others nod, crook their fingers or make some kind of grimace. One of my customers stubs down his pipe tobacco with an index finger.

This variety of approach can lead to errors. A woman at one of my recent auctions waved to a friend at the wrong moment—and nearly became the new owner of a heavy oak secretaire. Another woman often gets so excited that she raises her bid before any rival has a chance to come in; she doesn't realize she is bidding against herself.

Expert knowledge is needed to assess the value and quality of antique furniture, china, pictures and other *objets d'art*. It is easier for a layman to win first prize in a football pool than to pick up an old master for five shillings at an auction. Hidden treasures seldom escape the alert eye of the dealer.

About a year ago I sold a French seascape sent in by an elderly woman who had been sorting out her "oddments." The dealer who bought it—for 150 guineas—calmly cut it out of the frame. Soon afterwards, six other pictures came under the hammer. All were huge monstrosities in carved gilt frames. To my surprise, each one fetched £12-£15. After the sale the new owners ripped out the pictures. But this time they took away the frames.

Furnish for £110

The general level of prices at furniture auctions has remained constant even during the last few years. At current prices, a careful buyer can furnish a sitting-room, dining-room and bedroom with attractive furniture, carpets and curtains for about £110.

Good antiques always fetch high prices. Victorian furniture, once given away, has risen steadily in value. But slatted beds and hair mattresses are now almost worthless, and built-in cupboards in modern homes have killed much of the demand for wardrobes and chests of drawers. Television sets with small screens and only one channel go for a fraction of their original cost. Gas and electric cookers are cheap and plentiful. A fifteen-year-old girl got a piano for five shillings at one of my sales. It cost 30s. to get it home.

She was excited

I have found, in twenty-two years of auctioneering, that women are the most erratic customers in the saleroom. Once, a woman who had been carried away in the heat of the bidding came to me afterwards with the picture she had bought, asking if I would take it back. "I daren't take it home and tell my husband what it cost."

Last April, a flustered housewife told me she had bought a dining-table she didn't want, by confusing the numbers in her catalogue. I agreed to put it up again, provided she would make up any deficit. She made a £2 profit.

But men are by no means infallible. Once, as I took over the selling, my partner pointed out a little, unkempt man near the rostrum: "He's been buying up just about everything."

The little man continued to bid enthusiastically, and after an assistant had told me the man was unknown in the district, I stopped accepting his bids. By this time he had "spent" £420.

After the sale I asked him how he intended to settle. He produced £15—all he had in the world—and offered it as a deposit. "I didn't mean to actually *buy* the stuff," he explained. "I just wanted to reserve it, so that I could come back later and pick out what I need."

THE END

That's their lot! Three satisfied customers leave Anthony Wilks's sale—but while many bidders find bargains, others have no idea of values and pay more than they would in a shop

MEN are all ALIKE

by ROBERT STANDISH

ILLUSTRATED BY KURT ARD

IN the otherwise pleasant village of Totterdell-on-Thames, occupying a beautiful site on a bend in the river, stands a vast red-brick Victorian mansion of such impressive ugliness that those who mention it all tend to do so only in whispers. It is called The Grange.

From 1910, when the merchant prince who built this architectural horror went to his reward, until 1940 when, it will be remembered, Hitler created a housing shortage, The Grange stood empty. People with enough money to maintain such a house possessed enough to acquire something more pleasing to the eye. During the war years the house was given over to evacuees from the East End of London and in 1945 it was converted into a number of flats.

In the garden flat lived Major-General Sir Jeremy Chubb-Dalrymple-Chubb, K.B.E., C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., and Lady Chubb-Dalrymple-Chubb, whose triple-barrelled name beside the bottom bellpush gave The Grange a certain *cachet*.

When we first meet these two, it is high summer in the Thames Valley. There had been a steady downpour of glacial rain for the past seventy-two hours. The outlook for the next twenty-four hours was not encouraging. A low pressure area was sweeping in from the Atlantic. Only the ducks rejoiced.

General Chubb-Dalrymple-Chubb, clad in voluminous oilskins and carrying a fishing rod with the usual accessories, was striding across the garden towards the river.

"Chubby," called his spouse through the open window of her boudoir, "where are you going in this rain?"

"I am going fishing. I should have thought that was obvious, my dear Bedelia," roared the General.

"But you don't like fishing, Chubby. You told me so yourself."

"I detest fishing, my dear. It is a fatuous waste of time, to say nothing of being dashed uncomfortable. Furthermore, I never catch anything edible. Even the cat wouldn't eat the horrible thing I caught last week. . . ."

"Then why go?" queried Bedelia not unreasonably.

"Because," roared the General, "I heard you ask our neighbours the Blennerhassetts in to play bridge this afternoon and I'd rather drown worms and get soaked to the skin. He's a pompous bore and she cheats. Ask the Carling woman upstairs to make a fourth . . . she bears watching too."

FOR the remainder of the afternoon, huddled miserably in a fishing punt, the General remained in full view of the bridge players, but mercifully inaudible except when he hooked a discarded boot and his pungent monosyllables carried crystal clear across the river.

At five thirty, when Lady Chubb-Dalrymple-Chubb bellowed, "They've gone home . . . it's all clear," the General lifted anchor, paddled across to The Grange's private landing-stage and thence strode thankfully homewards across the sodden garden.

Changed and with a long whisky-and-soda in his hand, the General appeared depressed. His moustache drooped, a sure sign that his spirits were low. He glanced listlessly at the current issue of one of the shiny society weeklies until he came to the picture of a tall, graceful, gipsy-like girl, gazing soulfully into

They're inclined to wander when they get the chance,

but a clever woman can always make them come running

Men are all alike

continued from previous page

the eyes of a pleasant but weak-faced young man.

It was the caption which caused him to leap from his easy chair like a startled deer. It read: "Miss Dorcas Maidlow, one of Mayfair's undisputed belles, relaxing at Canuto's fashionable night spot with Lord Charles ffolliott-ffoulkes, second son of the Duke and Duchess of Camberwell. Those who should know hint at an early announcement. Orange blossom?"

"He looks rather a nice young man," observed Bedelia mildly in reply to her husband's violent reaction to the picture of his ward.

"His father looked a nice young man, too," said the General, "but if he hadn't married the daughter of Henry Granet, the American railway tycoon, his affairs would have landed him in the Bankruptcy Court . . . and a very dirty case it would have been. I don't like it, Bedelia, I don't like it. Dorcas should be able to do better than the second son of a shop-soiled Duke. . . ."

Dorcas telephoned from London three days later to invite herself down for the weekend. "She's in trouble of some kind," said Bedelia, who in taking the call had caught the note of urgency in the girl's voice.

The coming of Dorcas helped to dispel the sense of futility, which is the child of retirement and old age, from the ground floor of The Grange. There was a vitality about everything Dorcas said and did which gave a spice to life. That she was in trouble of some kind was evident. That was good, too, for the troubles of the young are like a backward glance to the old, a reminder that they too were once capable of delicious follies. The details would emerge in due time.

Dorcas chose the peaceful after-dinner hour to launch her recital of woes. For several long minutes there had been a silence in the drawing-room, broken only by the soothing click of Bedelia's knitting needles.

She ended the silence. "Charlie is taking me to stay with his father and mother next weekend. I suppose they want to give me the once-over before . . . well, before any announcement is made."

"Well, don't forget, my dear," said the General, "that I want to give this Charlie the once-over. If he's anything like his father, he's a nincompoop."

"I suppose you realize, Uncle Chubby," said Dorcas severely, "that Charlie's older brother is crazy about motor racing. . . ."

"What has that to do with it?" roared the General.

"Everything," was the calm reply. "If he busts a tyre at speed, I stand a good chance of being the next Duchess of Camberwell. Besides I love Charlie . . . he's sweet."

"That's what I feared," said the General. "What woman in her right senses wants a sweet husband? In addition to being sweet, what is he? What does he do?"

"Do?" echoed Dorcas bleakly. "Are dukes' sons supposed to do anything? Charlie breeds pouter pigeons . . . yes, and he has a polo team. . . ."

"All of which, doubtless, at the expense of that old bandit, his American grandfather, who must now be wishing, wherever he is, that he might have done something better with his money than support a pack of useless deadbeats. Surely, a girl with your brains and personality could have dredged up something better than this . . . Charlie?"

"Wait till you meet him before judging him, Uncle Chubby."

"I can't wait," replied the General.

After this bad start, there was another silence.

"Uncle Chubby," said Dorcas at last. "I'm in a mess. I need some help."

"Let's hear the worst, my dear. All of it . . . not just carefully selected snippets. What have you been doing?"

"Well, you remember when I used to model for photographers?"

"Will I ever forget it? You practically exiled me from my own club," replied the General. "Every time I went into the reading-room it was full of dirty old men sniggering over your pictures, wearing less all the time. You've not done any more of that, I hope."

Dorcas said: "You didn't mind a bit when I was posing in front of kitchen stoves and washing machines. It was only when the swimsuit people discovered what a nice figure I've got that you turned nasty. I don't know what you would have said if I hadn't turned down the *brassière* contract when I saw the proofs."

"I can never remember the difference between a *brassière* and a *brasserie*," said the old soldier.

"The child," said Bedelia, "is referring to what I believe are called 'uplift garments,' which seem to be worn these days by young women who don't need them, whereas women of my age who really need them, can't be bothered."

"Well," continued Dorcas, "I posed for a brand of what Aunt Bedelia calls uplift garments. The studio which took them played tricks with the camera and the photos came out not at all like what I had expected. Naturally, I hit the roof. . . ."

"Why?" asked the old soldier, who liked to have his i's dotted and his t's crossed.

"Because they weren't decent, Uncle Chubby, if you must have it. They were too . . . too revealing. I suppose is the word. Anyway, George Carliss—he was the head of the studio, but was away on holiday when the photos were taken—agreed with me that the photos should be suppressed and promised to see to the whole thing himself, at once. . . ."

"Well, thank God for that," said the old soldier. "No need now to resign from my club."

"Don't thank God until you've heard it all," said Dorcas. "I haven't finished yet. You've seen those pictures of me and Charlie in the shiny weeklies, haven't you? Well, so has somebody else. Two days ago a man who wouldn't give his name telephoned me. If he is to be believed, he has a set of those photos and . . . well, I think he wants to sell them, probably for a lot of money."

"Now, my dear," said the General, "either the chap does want to sell them, or he doesn't. Make up your mind—which is it? How much is he asking for them?"

"It isn't as simple and straightforward as that, Uncle Chubby. This is what he said: 'I was wondering, Miss Maidlow, whether the Duke of Camberwell would like a set for the family portrait gallery. What do you think?' I said I didn't think he would, or something equally silly, and the man said: 'Perhaps we'd better have a chat about it one day soon. I'll call you again.' Then he rang off. He said it all in a very nasty, threatening tone of voice, indeed."

"Undoubtedly blackmail," said the General. "Did you recognize the voice?"

"I'm not sure," replied Dorcas, "but I think I did. His voice reminded me of a nasty, scruffy little man who had something to do with the studio. He asked me one day to go to a cinema with him, but I wouldn't. Then he said I was treating him like dirt. It was all very unpleasant . . . and now, I just don't know what to do. It would be simply dreadful if he did send the photos to the Duke and Duchess, because I'm sure they'd never agree to Charlie marrying me."

"I'm not sure, my dear," interposed the General, "that that would be an undiluted misfortune. All the same, I can understand how you feel. Is that all?"

"Isn't it enough? The only other thing is that a friend has lent me a tape-recorder, which I've attached to my telephone, so the next time the man calls I shall have a record of the whole conversation. When I have that, I shall play it over to George Carliss and to all the other people I know at the studio, and I'm sure one of them will recognize the voice. Then, once I know who he is, I thought perhaps you'd be able to frighten him off for me and get the photos back."

It took the General time to digest this thought. He had, of course, heard of tape-recorders, just as he had heard of man-made satellites. But neither figured in his life. Hearing Dorcas talk so casually about this new device made him realize how outmoded he was and how little fitted—less fitted probably than Dorcas herself—to deal effectively with a slick blackmailer like the one they were up against.

Lady Chubb-Dalrymple-Chubb, from whom few things which happened in her husband's mind were hidden, hastened to his moral support. "As you say, my dear, once you have ascertained who the man is, the rest can be left to Chubby. I don't know any man

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Note From The Head

I should be glad if you could let me know why Lily has suddenly made up her mind that she is going to be an air hostess when she grows up. It is interfering with her work. Instead of listening to lessons she walks up and down the gangways between the desks and gives sweet smiles to the other children, which they greatly object to.

When she is told to sit down, she cries and accuses her teacher of stopping her from practising for her career.

Sometimes the other children play up to her and pretend to be suffering from air-sickness, and the realism of their performance quite ruins the lesson. Apparently a rather glamorous account of the life of an air hostess she has read described calming incipient panic, and when she does this in school, instead of leading to peace and quiet it leads to pandemonium.

The fancy-dress uniform in which she arrived this morning was quite unsuitable for her first two lessons—P.T. and cookery. I sent her home immediately I became aware of how she was dressed.

Recently she has begun to hand round barley-sugar and chewing-gum during class and I think the time has come to make a stand.

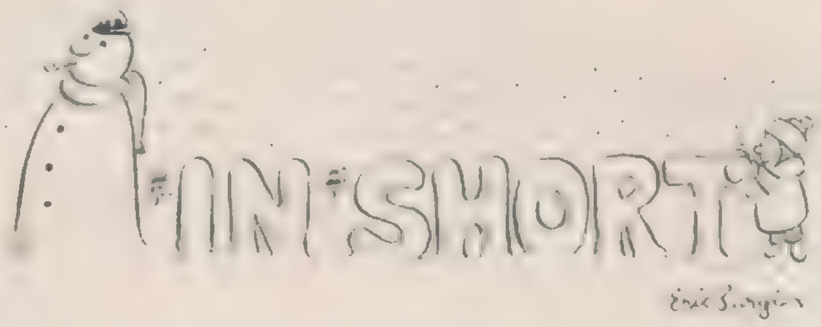
R. G. G. PRICE

Party Politics

Are the Pattersons friends of the Perkins?
Do the Browns and the Fothergills speak?
Are the Brewsters too old for the Serkins?
Isn't Forbush a bit of a freak?

Are the Lamperts a little too arty?
Have the Joneses got over their fight?
We may have a small dinner party,
If there's anyone left to invite!

RICHARD ARMOUR



Hotel Seeker's Guide

Highly recommended. . . . *Highly recommended by proprietor.*
Dominating position. . . . *Up long, steep hill.*
Children welcomed. . . . *Children accepted.*
Kiddies' paradise. . . . *Rocking horse provided.*
Continental cuisine. . . . *Spaghetti served.*
Vegetables from own garden. . . . *Unlimited cabbage.*
Good range of wines. . . . *White and red.*
Home-like atmosphere. . . . *Guests fight over chairs.*
Select. . . . *No braces at dinner; no dry-shaving in lounge.*
American bar. . . . *Bar.*
Mentioned by Shakespeare. . . . *Ten per cent extra.*
Suit honeymooners. . . . *Meals always late.*

E. S. TURNER

Let Me Help You With Your Coat

1. Heavens, no, it's not *late*—it's only half past one.
2. Of course I insist—I'll open another bottle.
3. No, really, it's a treat for us—we never stay up late as a rule.
4. The last bus goes in ten minutes—isn't it a shame?
5. Now that everyone else has gone, let's have a quiet cup of coffee.
6. Not a bit, I could listen to your stories all night.
7. Why move at all, then? We can easily put you up here.

PATRICK GOLDRING

MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME

Room for experiment

by Roger Smithells

Give youngsters a free hand in decorating their own rooms. The results will surprise and delight you

WHEN children are very young, two or three can share a room quite happily. They keep each other company; and hard-pressed parents have only one room to decorate, furnish and keep clean and tidy.

There is plenty of modern furniture made with an eye to saving space: two-tier bunks, and a set of three separate beds which telescopes together during the day. Decoration is easy; children like bright colours, and the parents' choice is governed by colours and surfaces which will resist kicks and blows without looking tatty too soon. But as the children grow older, sharing can lead to squabbles. A boy who is naturally quiet can be made miserable if he has to share with an incurably noisy brother, and vice versa.

A place of his own

From about the age of twelve upwards, any self-respecting child will welcome a place which he can call his own, preferably with a door which he can slam between the rest of the world and his private domain. This can be a room full of his hobbies and interests, decorated to please himself. It can grow up with its occupant through the awkward teen-age, from a glorified nursery to a grown-up bed-sitter, with space to have a friend in for a chat or to play records. Size does not matter but privacy does.

Not every house has elastic sides, nor unlimited extra rooms. Finding a room for each child may mean quite a bit of rearrangement. You may be able to convert an unused attic into a child's room, as I described in a recent article, or use the loft for the rubbish which accumulates in a box-room, leaving the box-room free for a child. A large bedroom with two or more windows can be divided with a partition or wardrobes and plasterboard, to make two separate children's rooms. One harassed father I know simply drew a chalk line down the floor and allotted one half of the room to each child.

Rooms in the garden

Another resourceful family, in a small, unstretchable house, with no prospect of moving to a bigger one, has bought the children a wooden hut or summer-house each, and mounted them on concrete plinths in the garden. The huts have been insulated inside with foil-backed plaster board, to keep out the cold.

Children and young people, particularly those with artistic leanings, have plenty of ideas about decorating. The teens are the time for forming tastes and opinions, and the first step is usually a revolt against everything familiar. Decorations are no exception. If you like restful schemes, your children will probably want flamboyant colours and plenty of them, or will paper one wall entirely with old newspapers, or pictures of Elvis Presley. If your taste tends to be colourful, your children will probably go in for conservative shades. Either way you do well to give them a chance to develop a taste of their own.

The wise parent will reverse the old maxim and speak only when spoken to where decorations are concerned. Younger children will probably need practical help—and ask for it. Older ones are more likely to want to keep all the pasting and brushing for themselves, and will probably make a good job of it, too.

Parents, of course, must foot the bill for materials. To avoid waste and mess, give a child every encouragement to finish the job. My own choice would be: one roll of highly coloured wallpaper, which needn't cost more than 8s., and can cut a dash on the chimney breast or in an alcove; an easily used plastic emulsion paint for the rest of the walls and ceiling, which turns out surprisingly well however erratically applied; one-coat non-drip jelly paint for the woodwork—most children want quick results and don't have the patience to prepare and undercoat surfaces properly.

The traditional floor covering for a child's room is linoleum. At nursery age this has practical advantages, but in an older child's room, with an eye to a future comfortable bedsitter, woollen cord carpet or sisal carpeting are worth considering. Both of these are hard wearing with a good life expectancy, and should last until your children leave home.

Buying the furniture also falls to the parents' lot, though children may enjoy painting whitewood pieces in their own way. When your child grows out of its cot is the time to buy a bed which will not look out of place in a grown-up bed-sitter. There are many plain divans on the market. Most can be fitted with a headboard when the child is smaller, which can be removed later. A fitted cover and scatter cushions will then convert the bed to a pleasant studio couch. In slightly more expensive ranges there are beds with slatted ends which look un-bed-like in a bedsitter.

Space for hobbies

A work-table is essential. Apart from the nightly demands of homework, hobbies grow with the child. Dinky toys give way to parts of real motor cars and making dolls' dresses is abandoned in favour of full-size garments for your daughter, with a consequent need of room to cut out and sew.

Pictures and ornaments are generally a shifting population as a child's taste changes and develops. A piece of pegboard with a generous supply of hangers will allow holiday souvenirs and loved objects to be put up and taken down with ease. Equally useful is a panel of softboard to pin up pictures, posters and postcards, or an ever changing scrapbook screen, where snapshots can be pasted. If your child is a poster addict buy him a large piece of plywood to mount the posters on.

A useful light fitting for a child's room is one of the movable wall fittings which can be pinned to the wall with an X-hook and plugged in at the skirting. This will allow for frequent moving of furniture, and still manage to give the right light in the right place.

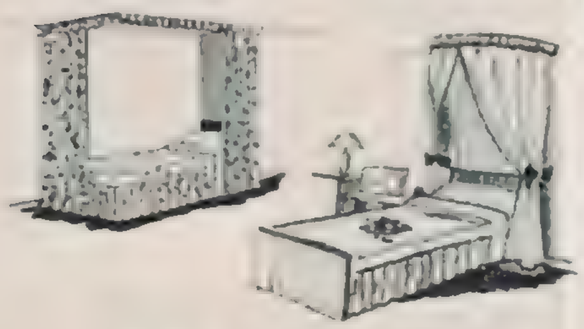
The parents' contributions of furniture, lights and raw materials for decoration are just the bare bones of the matter. What makes the character of the room are the ideas, likes and dislikes and ingenuity of the child or teenager who lives in it. Give him a free hand. You'll probably find that the room is kept clean and tidy without your having to say anything about it. You may even get some good ideas from it for yourself.

This teenage room is furnished with inexpensive G-plan furniture. Small, it still makes a cosy setting for tea and fun with the tape recorder

For the girls

A teenage girl needs room for clothes. On the left, door-hung shelves give room for small things—the top one makes a shut-away dressing-table. Shelves on the door add extra space

A dressing-table fitment made of an extended windowsill has room underneath for a large shelf and a small shoe rack which is hidden behind a curtain

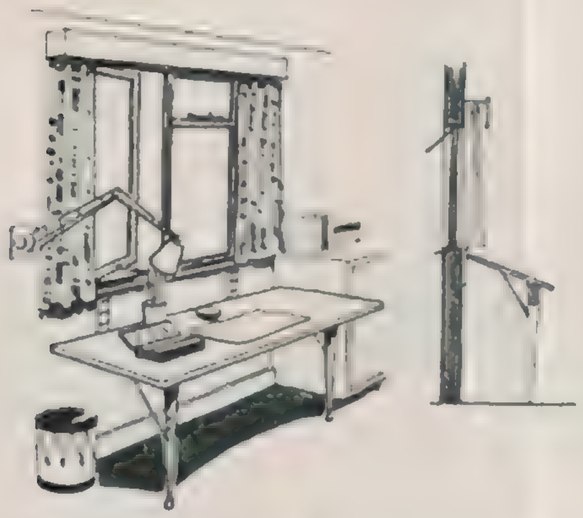


A curtain track in the ceiling gives a girl great scope for putting pretty curtains at the head of her bed, or right round to give a fourposter look

A panel of peg-board round the bed is the basis for an adaptable shelving scheme and picture arrangement. The wall-mounted bureau closes with a front flap

For the boys

A perfect room for a boy. He can make up the beehive-fronted chest himself from a Peerless kit. The seat has lift-up flaps, and a storage chest below. A panel of pegboard holds his trophies



A double-elephant size drawing board, on hinged legs, with a variable wall-fixing, makes a table which can be used at any angle for hobbies or homework

Double hanging rails give twice the space, but take up no more room. The one mirror can be shut away

The bulkhead problem solved. A flap desk is mounted on top of it, backed with wall-mounted book-shelves to the ceiling. The desk folds up when out of use

Crocodile trader

continued from page 9

our clothes, cursing under our breath. Facts! Figures! And at this hour in the morning.

Tying up snared crocs had been bad enough. Now we had to seize the brutes in their natural habitat and truss them up, while others milled about our legs.

As the dim outline of the stockade loomed ahead my morale touched sub-zero.

Once inside, hemmed in by the loathsome reptiles, the feeling of revulsion was accentuated. I wanted to turn and run. Jones had brought boys to assist, but these, very intelligently, lingered by the entrance.

"Come on now, get cracking," said Jones briskly. "How often have I told you, crocs are cowards. Here, let me show you." He grabbed a piece of sacking and flicked to left and right, as if scattering hens from a fowl-run. The reptiles cowered behind each other, not one as much as showed its teeth.

For the short trip overland to our barge, in which the crocs were to be taken down-river to Mambova, the village nearest to Krantz's farm, a sledge was roped on to our jeep. This served as a container enabling the crocs to lie stretched out at their ease. The crocs loaded, we set off for the river, very alive to Arthur's warning that extreme care was essential. Tied-up crocodiles became exceedingly restive, and this restlessness is contagious.

Jones now informed us that the extra boys had been taken along to lie on the crocs should they start playing up when on the water.

"I guess if they perform they'll hole the barge in seconds," was his culminating encouragement.

Once loaded on to the barge at the river, the crocodiles were covered with grass and then liberally sprinkled with water. "To try and kid them they're back in the water, otherwise, sure as hell, they'll try and reach it through the timbers," Jones informed us.

Out in the river our 35 h.p. engine combined with the current to send us hurtling along so that even Jones, hunched over the steering, was forced to admit: "The river sure is running stronger." This was another worry; with the rise in the water level the whole aspect of the terrain had altered. Sandbanks were submerged, and even the river-banks looked different as water reclaimed more and more of the land.

When Mambova was reached, the crocodiles had given little trouble—probably because as soon as any had shown signs of playing up, it had been promptly lain on and its efforts squashed. Arthur's warning had sunk home; restive brutes had been immediately wrapped in our arms. The response to these attentions was unfailing. They just lay back and relaxed!

Krantz's truck was waiting at Mambova, backed up against the quay, to receive our catch.

Unfortunately the truck was not the only thing waiting. Word of our arrival had got about and the whole population had assembled on the quay, eager to watch the fun.

Willing hands off-loaded the smaller specimens from barge to truck, where they were laid out head towards the engine, and securely tied down. All went well until the last of the small ones, an eight-footer, began to wriggle and twist. The new hands yelled and let go, and Graham and crocodile overbalanced and disappeared into the water.

Graham was not amused; less so when, as he and the crocodile lay panting on the bank, Jones remarked: "I sure hope Peggy's come to no harm."

Recently, despite divers warnings to us against familiarity, Jones had taken to naming his charges. Even saurians have distinctive traits, and the Yank knew each and every one. Peggy, I felt, was a misnomer, as I glanced at the repulsive reptile lying by Graham's side, with Jones running a caressing finger over it, probing for injury.

Quickly I knelt down beside Graham, lit him a cigarette and inquired as to *his* health. It averted an incident . . . just.

We reached Krantz's farm long after dark, and received a shock. Krantz must have been talking, for most of the white population of the area, and all the black, were awaiting our arrival.

Jones had no sooner alighted than he

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SMILES—1

A woman has two smiles that an angel might envy: the smile that accepts a lover before words are uttered, and the smile that lights on the first-born baby.

T. C. Haliburton

"Well, thank goodness that's the last we'll see of your friends"

STORK STEAMBOAT CAKE

All children like a party cake that's a little novel and out of the ordinary . . . so when you launch the S.S. Stork, the success of *your* party is assured. The children won't know how much of the success is due to Stork's easy creaming—but you will!

SPONGE SANDWICH MIXTURE:

12 oz. Stork Table Margarine
12 oz. (12 rounded tablespoons) castor sugar
6 eggs
12 oz. (12 heaped tablespoons) self-raising flour

ADDITIONS:

1 heaped tablespoon cocoa, sieved
2 tablespoons boiling water
Blue culinary colouring

STORK ICING:

9 oz. Stork Table Margarine
1¼ lb. icing sugar, sieved
A few drops any flavouring
4½ tablespoons milk or fruit juice

DECORATIONS, ETC.:

Oblong silver cake board, 2-3 inches larger all round than base of cake
Small flat red sweets
White sweets with holes
4 medium-sized candles

Have ready two Swiss Roll tins or other shallow tins—approx. 9 x 13 inches and 6 x 10 inches—lined with greaseproof paper and brushed all round inside with melted Stork.

To make Sponge Sandwiches, cream Stork and sugar together until very light. Beat in eggs one at a time, adding a little sieved flour with each egg after the first. Fold in remaining flour. Divide mixture between prepared tins; smooth tops.

Bake smaller cake in moderate oven (Regulo Mark 4: 360°F.) second shelf from the top for 25-30 minutes. Place the larger on shelf immediately underneath at same time and bake for 30-35 minutes. Remove smaller cake, turn out carefully on to strip of sugared greaseproof paper, strip off paper, trim off edges; quickly roll up, holding underneath with sugared greaseproof paper; cool on wire tray.

Remove larger cake, turn out, remove paper and cool on wire tray. When cold, cut into two portions, one about one-third larger than the other, and round off the front ends, as illustrated, to form base and deck of the boat. Cut a strip from straight end of larger portion for deck cabin and trim to size.

TO MAKE STORK ICING: Cream Stork and half icing sugar until very light. Add remaining icing sugar, flavouring and liquid and beat again until very light.

CHOCOLATE ICING: Blend cocoa with water and cool. Remove 4 heaped tablespoons of the icing and beat in blended cocoa.

TO FILL SWISS ROLL: Carefully unroll, spread with half chocolate icing and roll up again.

BLUE ICING: Remove half remaining white icing. Place in separate bowl and beat in blue colouring.

TO FINISH: Coat cake board with a little icing and press down base of boat. Coat sides of base of boat with white icing, smoothing with a palette knife. Coat top of boat base with some of the remaining chocolate icing. Coat top of deck and cabin with chocolate icing. Coat cake board with roughened blue icing. Cut three slices of Swiss Roll, each one inch thick. Press one on each side of boat to represent paddles. Press the third in front of cabin.
Using a small plain tube and white and blue icing, decorate as illustrated, pressing on sweets and candles where indicated.

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Crocodile trader

continued from page 20

was collared by reporters. Flash-bulbs popped and cameras clicked. Delighted, Jones played up manfully.

Graham and I, already beat to the wide, wanted only to get to sleep, but to Jones such publicity was a tonic. Leaving him to it, we backed the truck up against the wall encircling the pond and began to off-load through the entrance doorway. Not only had the crocodiles to be taken to the pond, but once inside had to be set free—a desperate undertaking, for the antics of the crowd had excited the brutes to frenzy.

The pond enclosure resembled a swimming-pool, with a stretch of grass at one end, between the water and encircling wall. The pool itself was roughly half the size of a standard swimming-pool, cement-lined, and with a concrete border extending several feet back from the sides.

It was all quite impressive, and a final touch was added by a spectator's stand. This was built flush with the top of one wall and now, from this vantage point, torches probed the night, spotlighting us and the crocodiles, while an expectant babble rose from all around.

Such was the atmosphere as we started to untie the saurians. One of the first essentials when freeing a crocodile is to keep a torch steady on its eyes, to bamboozle and daze the creature as soon as it can see. Unfortunately flash-bulbs have a stronger light than any torch, and continuous flashes distracted the attention of the reptiles from the hypnotic effect of the spotlight.

Graham, holding the spotlight, and standing right at the head of each croc, became more and more unhappy; not without reason. First the rope was unwound and removed from the body. Then the sacking and rope binding around the head was loosened and removed with a jerk. It was at this juncture that it was imperative to hold the brutes' eyes with the light, but the final "unfrocking" act was also the most photogenic. In the resultant medley of flashing bulbs the bewildered crocodile found it impossible to keep its eyes on the light. Fortunately it also was too bewildered and frightened to do anything at all!

Crocodile after crocodile was freed and just sat tight. Jones had assured us, before operations began, that all would make straight for the water, but none did. Soon we were untying crocs while others lay supine between our feet.

A woman screamed . . .

When only the two large ones remained, we suggested to Arthur that before releasing them the others must be cajoled into the pond.

"Sure, sure, and nothing could be easier," he said. He grabbed a pole and began to splash water over the nearest brute. The crocodile breathed deeply, but that was all. Not an inch did it move.

Jones was not the man to countenance such behaviour. "I hate folks who sulk, and that goes for you too, baby," he grated, and each word could be clearly heard above the sudden silence which had fallen on the crowd. "Now, then, just watch this lot," he cried, and prodded the brute hard in the belly with the pole.

He had been looking for a climax and got it. The crocodile flashed round. Great jaws closed upon the pole and snapped it with a report like a rifle-shot. A woman screamed. Otherwise, the sigh that emanated from the crowd was certainly not a thing of fear; rather deep gratification.

Jones bowed, selected a new pole and continued with the prodding. Soon the brute took the hint and quickly the remainder followed suit. One after the other they went to the water, swam to the farthest end of the pool and hid their heads in shame (or it might have been disgust).

That left only the "big fellas," and a nasty expectant sigh rose from the mob as we took up position and began to loosen their ropes. The eleven-footer was freed without incident and took to the water without any prodding. Graham had to do a quick side-step as the brute hurtled past to strike the water like a torpedo.

Consequently, as I prepared to remove the canvas sacking from the last one, I shouted: "Watch out, Graham, here we go." As the sacking came off, Graham jumped, but nothing happened. The croc lay still. Encouraged by observation of Arthur's earlier performance Graham stepped up to its head and shone his light directly into its eyes from a range of less than two feet.

A tremor ran though the gigantic frame, but before I could shout any warning the brute had leaped straight for the water. Unfortunately, Graham lay directly between it and this objective. Instinctively he jumped back, and disappeared with a loud splash. The crocodile pancaked after him and also disappeared in a cloud of foam.

A sigh, that could have been pleased anticipation, from the platform; my own strangled gasp then Jones, the pole thrust before him like a spear, streaked past me into the pool. I bounded after him, but both of us were much too slow. The waters erupted and in one movement Graham was beside us on the bank, dripping water and cursing volubly.

A murmur of disappointment passed through the crowd. Their appetite had been whetted, but consummation denied. Ninety-five per cent of the onlookers were African, and they still hankered after the blood sports of not so long ago.

Jones turned to Krantz. "Bring on the meat," he ordered.

We were told to lay out the food on the concrete border of the pool. "Crocodiles are shy eaters in captivity. They must be taught right now," Jones stated in loud tones, no doubt for the benefit of the onlookers who, deprived of the pleasures of observing a human being consumed, were now content to hang around and watch the crocs feed on donkey flesh.

He counted each piece of meat laid out so that we could tell what had been taken in the morning. I had expected the crocs to surge round after these perks, but they exhibited no interest and remained huddled together, showing their backs; most disgruntled.

The news spreads . . .

The meat distributed, we set off for Livingstone and bed. By the time we reached the hotel it was close on three in the morning. "You can have a long lie in tomorrow, fellas," Jones informed us grandly. "I'll not knock you up until close on seven."

Shattered, we retired. He turned us out at 6.30 a.m. and, by seven o'clock, we were back on the farm counting repulsive and strongly tainted lumps of donkey meat. Only six portions had been consumed, but Jones was not discouraged. The babes were off their feed, but that could soon be altered.

Over breakfast he informed us that we could have the morning off. Walking about turned out to be quite embarrassing. In a town the size of Livingstone news had travelled fast. Everybody knew of our project and wanted to hear the story. We fled into a barber's, after being waylaid by several strangers, but this was bad strategy. It took us an hour and a half to extricate ourselves and, even then, we retired in confusion.

Our next halt was the local, and here we found the rôle of hero more congenial, beer after beer arrived in quick succession. Nobody would hear of us putting up a round. We were shown the morning paper, featuring us as headline news. Never before had live crocodiles been captured in Rhodesia. Tongues loosened by beer we went to town on the story. By the time we returned to our hotel for lunch we were afflicted by what might politely be described as a distinctive seafaring gait.

Arthur took it well and, to our relief, stated that he had decided to spend another night in town.

The jalopy creaking and groaning under a heavy load of provisions, we left for Mambova around noon next day. When we arrived we had no difficulty in having the kit unloaded. Every boy in the place was there to greet us —"the men who make friends with crocodiles." One dear old lady rushed up to Jones and gushed: "I do so hope that you gentlemen intend prolonging your visit. It's such an interest for our natives."

Largesse, mainly in the shape of "coke," distributed, we ran down-channel and turned our blunt nose upstream, Jones being determined to make camp, shoot bait, and lay snares before nightfall, but this was not to be. Coming down-river the current had been our friend but now, even with our powerful 35-h.p. engine, battling against it was slow and arduous. The current buffeted our bows and held us practically motionless.

When we did reach camp, Jones turned in for an early night. This suited our plans ideally. Graham and I were looking for a chance to sneak out on to the river by ourselves and earn some extra cash by killing crocs for their skins.

Towed by crocodile

Accompanied by a deaf-mute African called Dumbie, we took to the water. Our craft leaked badly, but we caught a few small crocodiles with our hands and, feeling that we knew all there was to know about that sort of thing, decided to harpoon a few larger specimens, something around the eight-foot mark.

I soon spotted one and, with Dumbie at the oars and Graham on the light, we edged in for the kill. Nonchalantly I waited until the brute was practically under the gunwale, then threw straight and true.

Either this crocodile had been misjudged for size, or suffered from close-set eyes and these had deceived us, for the result was devastating. Its tail smote the water, sending spray cascading into my face and rocking the boat alarmingly. Then, after a second of quiet, the boat shot forward with a jerk, sending me sprawling in the scuppers.

I picked myself up to find the tow-rope stretched taut as a violin string, and the boat charging through the waters as if in tow to a whale. The difference was that when towed by a whale there is open sea and plenty of room to manoeuvre. Here we were in a shallow inland lake, and the crocodile was making for a thick bank of reeds.

Shouting to Graham I pulled on the rope. Feeling the strain the crocodile turned at right angles, nearly capsizing the boat and making our predicament worse than ever . . . the change of direction took us charging straight for an outcrop of rock. Jagged rocks loomed out of the darkness a few yards ahead as if eager to tear the bottom from our boat.

Graham lent a hand on the rope, but neither jerking nor pulling could direct the antics of our crocodile. One moment the rope would hum like a thing alive, the next it would go slack, to tauten again with a sudden jerk that took our bows nearly under. Frantically we would make for the stern to counterbalance the down drag, but before we

Everybody's Puzzling

QUIZZLE

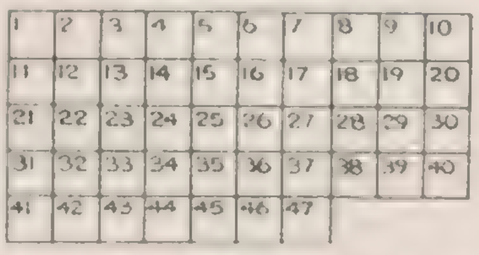
The letters in numbered squares, if placed in the small grid to the left of the puzzle in numerical sequence, will spell a well-known quotation and help to check your solutions.

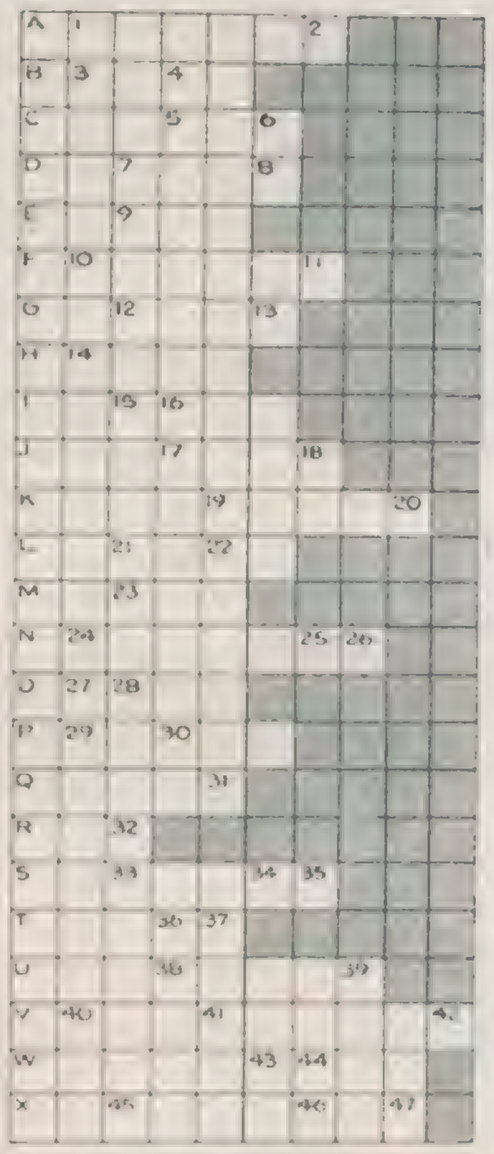
CLUE DOWN

A. Edgar Allan Poe's classic thriller (3, 7, 2, 3, 3, 6).

CLUES ACROSS

A. This day is the Epiphany.
B. Pigment for dyeing nails and hair.
C. Settlement of an estate on a series of heirs.
D. Small seeded cereal.
E. Under-teacher.
F. Clydeside county of Scotland and its county town.
G. Himalayan cedar tree.
H. Surname of composer of "Pomp And Circumstance."
I. A division of the county of Yorkshire.
J. Purple, goats-beard plant with asparagus-like root.
K. Improvised.
L. Legal infancy or minority.
M. Door keeper in Freemasonry.
N. Spanish-American ranch.
O. Town in Palestine where Saul consulted a witch.
P. Type of sleeve, named after a Crimean commander.
Q. Flat inflorescence of stalked flowers with common centre.
R. Newt.
S. Founder of religion set forth in the Koran.
T. Beyond what is customary or proper.
U. Sixteenth-century French writer, famed for coarse and robust humour.
V. Epicure.
W. Slang term for University student.
X. In leaf throughout the year.





BRAIN TEASER by Fred Borders

Tom and his father enjoy the sea, Tom in his rowing boat and Dad in his sailing dinghy. Tom wants a sailing dinghy of his own, but Dad thinks he isn't ready for it yet.

"You can have one when my experience of the sea is three times as long as yours," he promises.

At present, this experience is 4 times as long as his son's, but 2 months ago it was 5 times as long.

When will Tom get his dinghy?

NOW TURN TO PAGE 31 FOR THE ANSWERS

"I'm coming! I'm coming! You don't have to knock the door down"

had sat down the bows would lift, and we would be charging once more towards the rocks.

"Cut the rope," I shouted.

"And how the hell will we explain that to Jones?"

True, we were using Arthur's rope: its absence would not pass unobserved. I hesitated for a moment and the rope went slack.

"The harpoon's out, or the rope's parted," said Graham, clambering forward to investigate. Next moment he gave a yelp of fear. Five yards away our harpoon cut the water like a periscope as the crocodile charged in at speed.

"Row, row!" I roared at Dumbie, going through the requisite gestures. Puzzled, Dumbie turned, took one look, and collapsed in the bottom of the boat.

Thrusting him aside I seized an oar and stood up to ward off the attack as best I could. Tightening my grip I thrust the oar forward like a spear. The crocodile's mouth was open. If I could plunge the blade down its throat there might be a chance; that was our only hope.

I waited until the crocodile was mere feet from the side, then lunged the oar blade into its cavernous mouth. Crunch, it was splintered into matchwood.

The crocodile came on and in seconds was worrying at the boat. Graham hurled another harpoon which sank in just behind the head. Infuriated, the reptile rose in the water and tried to get at us in the boat. The brute was well over ten feet and its weight, resting on the side of the boat, caused our frail craft to dip. Fortunately this dislodged the crocodile, but the brute swiped at us with its tail, missing the boat by a coat of paint.

Then it decided that it had had enough and turned away, streaking for the shelter of the rocks.

Picking up my knife I slashed the ropes and, relieved of the burden of the boat, the crocodile shot into the rocks and was lost to view.

'Croc attacked us'

"This'll take some explaining away," I grumbled, sitting down to better control my shaking knees.

"To hell with Jones. We're alive and that's all that matters," was Graham's forthright retort.

Rooting Dumbie from the bottom of the boat, we dumped our catch at the secret spot where we skinned and stored the crocs we caught ourselves, and returned to camp, to find Jones awaiting us, eyes inquisitive. "I guess you guys have had trouble?" was his greeting.

Graham, who had completely recovered any aplomb lost, reached for a "coke," drank deeply and took up the tale, a tale which bore little relation to the facts.

"A ten-footer attacked the boat. We got it with a harpoon, but it still came on. We put two harpoons into it, but it was dragging us towards the rocks so we had to cut the ropes. I wish you'd been there. A few feet of film of that would have been worth a fortune."

"I suppose it would," said Arthur slowly. He smiled thinly and added: "Have you ever considered writing up the trip? I sure reckon you've got what it takes to put over a best-seller!" His face was bland, but I had a horrible feeling we had failed to deceive Arthur Jones.

Fritz, a little mongrel dog I had made my pet, saved us from a reply which might have been compromising. He had been lying quietly at my feet, but now he pricked his ears and barked. Then, crouched low and growling, he moved towards the door.

Hippo gets annoyed

The moon was reasonably bright, bright enough to show up a colossal shape standing a few yards away. Fritz dashed forward giving tongue aggressively. The shape moved in to meet him. Nonplussed, Fritz halted and then we made out what it was . . . a bull hippo, not at all in friendly mood.

Jones gave a whoop of joy and dashed for his camera. The practical Graham went for a rifle. Fritz and I were left to entertain the visitor.

Fritz, deciding that attack was the best defence, rushed in and began to worry the beast, as if driving in a cow for milking, but the hippo ignored him completely. It had something else on its mind. Ponderously it moved nearer, making the most horrible noises. Suddenly it dawned on me that Mr. Hippo objected to our fire. It was moving purposefully towards the blaze.

Jones, who had reappeared camera in hand, skipped about trying to get decent shots, while Graham shouted at him to keep out of the way so that he could shoot the brute. After seconds of this comedy even Arthur realized that something would have to be done or the animal would knock our hut over.

Graham was ordered to fire over its head. He did so, but the hippo ignored the warning. It just came right on at us.

"I guess we'd best damp the fire," said Arthur, and this was quickly done. The effect was immediate. The protestations ceased and, having enforced its authority concerning the showing of naked fires by night, the hippo departed, grumbling—no doubt about the lack of consideration shown by human beings.

We left the fire extinguished. "I guess the fella's courtin' and that's sure best done by moonlight," drawled Jones, and we let it go at that. But without the protection of a fire I slept badly for the remainder of the night.

The news from Krantz's farm was encouraging. The crocs were feeding well, although none ate for some days after travelling. This aspect disturbed Jones who, after reflection, decided that the

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Ideal Home MAGAZINE—2/3

OUT TUESDAY, JANUARY 26th

Crocodile trader

continued from previous page

brutes must be in prime condition before leaving Rhodesia.

He announced that to ensure this, each croc would have to be hand-fed. The news shook us on our heels and we lodged a strong protest, but Jones was inflexible as Khrushchev and, the following weekend, ordered us to accompany him and put matters to the test.

He explained that this was a very delicate performance, requiring the careful weaning of each crocodile.

We believed him.

Without even the solace of a fortifying beer we had to go along to Krantz's farm to watch and note. There was one thing about it; Jones never asked anybody to do anything that he would not do himself.

A lump of meat in his hand he now squatted down on the edge of the pool and began to call his flock in low grunting tones. Only a nasal speaker could produce such a note, or a crocodile for, one after the other, they surfaced and moved closer to "brother" Jones.

Repulsive, loathsome

It was night, and a wane moon shone palely, accentuating the impact of the bizarre scene. "How d'you fancy this job? Don't forget, if he gets away with it, we'll be doing it next weekend," warned Graham. As if I were likely to overlook such a possibility!

The pool was now patterned with snouts and eyes, and Jones was not a yard from the edge. One sweep of a tail and he would be in the water, and it would be up to us to effect his rescue.

I didn't like it; to me crocodiles are as repulsive and loathsome as snakes, and who would consider hand-feeding snakes?

Patches of fleecy cloud played hide and seek with the moon, but Jones did not budge an inch, except to collect and place several portions of meat on the cement by his side. He was luring the brutes to take it from the cement first and, in so doing, to become accustomed to his presence.

A stage whisper from Graham: "He's off his rocker. In crocodiles the top jaw is the mobile one. How the hell can they grab that meat?"

A thicker-than-usual patch of cloud obscured the moon and when it passed my fists knotted. A repulsive head had risen from the water, dragon claws scraped for purchase on the cement border, and in a second the brute had levered itself up until it was hanging on to the side with both front feet like a resting swimmer. It eyed the meat, cocked its head on one side, scooped up the meat with its lower jaw, and slid back into the pool, its scaly body brushing Arthur's legs.

The slow deliberation of its movements was blood-curdling. Should the meat be taken at all I had anticipated a sudden dash, followed by a hasty retreat, but each movement had been slow and infinitely deliberate.

Several rose in like manner and took a ration.

Still, if this was what Jones called *hand-feeding* we could cope. So far there had been no need for Arthur's presence. The crocs would, no doubt, have fed quite as well had he been ten miles away.

I passed some comment to this effect and Arthur overheard it. Wheeling, he signalled me forward with a hand.

"Say, Bill, I sure wouldn't like you to be under any misapprehension. This is all part of my plan. Come closer and see for yourself."

I inched forward. "Say, don't dither about like a woman." He flicked a piece of meat from beneath a pair of massive jaws and hit the owner of these jaws a resounding smack on the eyes. "You ain't gettin' any more, Daisy," he stormed, lunging again at the reptile. Daisy slunk away like a chastened dog.

He explained that Daisy, and other more reckless types, were eating all the meat, while the balance had not yet come forward. He would persist with his present endeavours until all had become indifferent to his presence; then hand-feeding would begin.

While the brutes ate, Jones kept up his lullaby, coaxing the more nervous forward and repulsing the greedy from second, or more, helpings. Observing my anxiety, he went on, between times, to assure me that alligator jaws were poorly muscled and that once such jaws were closed a human could hold them shut with his hands.

I listened patiently, afraid to voice two obvious objections. One, what was true of the American alligator might not also apply to African crocodiles. Secondly, what use would it be keeping the jaws closed, if indeed one could, when your arm or leg was already clamped inside?

I watched apprehensively as several crocs, encouraged by success, clambered right out of the pool and began to tear at the meat.

This led to trouble. A thirteen-footer snapped at a meat ration a second after a smaller specimen already had the meat in its mouth.

There was a cracking of armoured bone and the jaws of the smaller crocodile, a ten-footer at least, were crushed to pulp.

It thrashed about frenziedly and Jones came to urgent life. "Get ropes and drag it away. Quick now, before a general rough-house starts."

Assisted by Dumbie and another African, Sanganga, both of whom had become inured to such goings on, we roped the brute and dragged it aside. There had been little wrong with the strength of that thirteen-footer's jaws, I reflected soberly as the mangled victim was drawn clear and laid out well away from the pool.

Jones bustled over to take a look. "Is it dead?" he inquired. We studied the body carefully from a safe distance. Jones guffawed. "D'you mean to say you don't know the test?" he chided and legs astride, took up position right over the brute's neck.

"Watch carefully, now," he ordered as he bent down and, with naked hands, eased open the upper jaw. It came up readily in his hands.

"Dead as a door-nail," he went on, adding: "If the jaw opens easily it's a gonner. If it doesn't, move . . . and quick!"

"Don't you think the jaws might move faster than your hands if it were alive?" I queried.

"Sure they might do, but that's a hazard of the trade." Releasing the jaw, which fell shut listlessly, he stood up and stretched. "It's purely a matter of backing one's judgment. If you're sure it's dead there ain't no risk."

"What margin is allowed for an error of judgment?" Graham interjected.

"There sure ain't no margin. A guy can only make one mistake with a crocodile," he drawled, and returned to the pool, shaking his head.

He stood deliberating for a few moments and, at sight of him, one or two crocodiles rose hopefully in the water. "They sure seem tame enough now. Let's give hand feeding a try," he commented, as if ordering another cup of tea and, delving into the meat basket, collected a few hunks of meat before returning to a squatting position on the edge of the pond.

Holding the meat at arm's length, and some inches above the water, he began to entice the reptiles to rise and try a piece. I shivered.

A few minutes passed, then there was a circle of eyes and snouts around his hand. And, right beneath his hand, the water slowly parted and a snout edged upwards. Had I been in his position I'd have jumped back as if stung, but Jones was of stouter heart. Holding the meat steady he began to croon and lower it gently towards the waiting snout.

Lazily, as if yawning, the brute opened its jaws, disclosing fearsome teeth. It was horrific, yet fascinating. As the head rose so did Jones elevate his hand, keeping the dangling meat that few inches above the lethal jaws. He played with that crocodile as a man might play when teaching a dog to beg.

Jaws agape expectantly, the whole head cleared the water. In any other creature the attitude might have been described as entreaty, even supplication. To me it was a heinous charade. At any second I expected a sudden leap, a clamping of jaws and a handless Jones, but the pace never altered, and now Jones began to lower the ration and rub it on the brute's snout before hastily removing it again. He did this several times, then poked the meat into the open jaws.

From that night on the crocodiles began to feed better and pick up weight. Some weekends Graham and I were forced into town and quickly became proficient in the hand-feeding art.

Once our natural revulsion had been overcome, the art was simple. As long as the meat was held in the hand the crocodile had only one interest . . . that piece of meat. However, as soon as the meat was dropped it was imperative to pull back the hand with all speed. Several crocs often rose after the same piece of meat and, if a hand still dangled above their snouts, who could blame them for considering this just another offering from the gods?

Hand feeding did not completely eliminate squabbles and fights. Several more were mauled and had to be destroyed, but nobody worried. There were plenty crocodiles in the Zambesi, and every lake was crammed with them.

Once Sanganga and several farm boys had been initiated into hand feeding Graham and I managed to avoid many trips to town. Not only were such trips a waste of time we could have spent catching crocs of our own, but they were a pain in the neck for another reason. As soon as we showed our faces in Livingstone we were followed by a crowd of admirers. Any publicity-hungry film star would be well advised to adopt a crocodile pet. Overnight the brutes had made us headline news; soon we were heartily sick of being hounded everywhere we went.

Jones, who appreciated company at weekends, was not too keen on leaving us in camp, but the arrangement worked well for some weeks, during which time the weather remained fine, contrary to all seasonal habit, and our private pile of skins mounted daily.

One weekend we went far down-lake and followed some crocodiles right into the shallows. Our small craft was nippy on the water and, besides, by this time we had ceased to have any fear of the brutes. We had learned, not only that crocs are cowardly, but many other things. The larger the crocodile the duller its eyes gleam and this, coupled with judging the space between the eyes, had resulted in our landing over a hundred specimens without incident. No wonder we were blasé!

The gleaming eyes . . .

That night a few had already been despatched and now, directly ahead, where shallows gave way to bank, eyes showed, and gleamed dully. Graham worked the light, Dumbie steered, and I held the harpoon. Normally that dull glow would have warned us that the brute was too big to handle, but this time there was a difference. The eyes shone *above* the surface of the water, and the nearer we approached, the higher above us the eyes appeared.

An unusual and disturbing phenomenon! Curiosity aroused, we edged in to investigate. Graham held the light aloft, and soon we realized that the brute was lying on the bank above water level, some few feet above. This was most unusual; crocodiles are rarely to be found on sandbanks by night.

Closer and closer we crept in, until the

"It has to be the exact shade of the top of this refrigerator"

SMILES—2

There are few faces that can afford to smile: the smile is sometimes bewitching, in general vapid, often a contortion.

Disraeli

bow scraped to a stop against the bank, and Dumbie, who had quickly adjusted himself to engines, switched off.

Perhaps the bow of the boat sent a faint tremor through the bank, or perhaps only now did the croc get our taint, but, whatever the cause, things happened quickly. The huge body took off, right above our heads, making for the water by the shortest route.

I heard Graham yell, spotted his body sprawling into the bottom of the boat and realized the boat had become a crazy rocking-horse. Then the spotlight went out. Groans were followed by sounds of splintering timber and the boat nearly turned turtle.

In the sudden darkness nothing could be seen. Was the crocodile aboard, or had it hit the side of the boat and slithered into the water? I had to know, and quickly.

Groping forward I peered about, but could make nothing out. Then Dumbie started to create in his own inimitable style. That could mean the croc was in the boat! Delving into my pocket I found the hand torch which I always carry and, after some fumbling, switched on.

Graham and Dumbie, but no crocodile.

However, there was something else—plenty of water—and I could see at a glance that its level was rising. I noted also that the crocodile had hit the side of the boat as it dived, springing several timbers. Water cascaded in and was already swishing about, several inches deep, in the bottom of the craft.

"Stuff the leaks with rags before we sink," I shouted. It was a good idea, had there been any rags. Off came our clothes and, pushing these into the holes, we made for home at speed. We bailed for our lives, but still the water gained.

I suggested jettisoning the catch, but this Graham would not hear of, maintaining that once we got home it could easily be taken down lake in the barge. That was all very well, but meantime the boat was settling lower in the water. The big question was, would we ever reach home!

We removed our socks and stuffed them into cracks, then Graham started bailing with his hat and, between both these measures, the inflow steadied. A terrific relief! Hereabout the water was full of crocodiles and I'd had enough of crocodiles for the time being.

We made it, but with little to spare. Beaching the boat we inspected the damage and Graham reckoned that it could be repaired. "A few long nails, some caulking, and a couple of crocodile skins will do the job," he stated confidently, and he was right. Before long the boat was as good as new.

Meantime, having beached the boat, we transferred our catch to the barge, dumped it at the cache, and returned to bed, but found it hard to sleep. We had received a rude awakening to the dangers besetting our calling.

We smoked and talked of this and that until, as usual, our thoughts returned to the Zambesi. It was the end of January, by which time the river normally had reached peak, yet, by some quirk of fate, the floods had not yet started. However, Sanganga had received a visit from a brother who lived up-river at Sesheke and there it was raining hard.

That meant the floods could come upon us at any moment. It was a disturbing reflection, for Jones simply would not credit that there was any danger. Time and again we had tried to reason with him, but to no avail.

Our thoughts darted this way and that, seeking a solution, but there was none, unless we packed up, and that would cost us a trip to the States.

All we could do was hope that the river would give us adequate warning, but well we realized that the Zambesi is unpredictable.

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NEXT WEEK: Our race against time—and the Zambesi floods

Too many ghosts

continued from page 13

down." But he did not pay heed to her.

Hero moved into the breach saying: "Freddie is quite right, of course, I am not yet prepared to call my work finished. There are still many things we do not know."

He was feeling oppressed again. There was no doubt about it, there was an atmosphere now. It was affecting them all, making them do and say strange things.

It brought a kind of half-sobbing cry from Beth. "Must we really know everything?"

Isobel said: "It's possible to know too much sometimes, isn't it?"

Hero could feel the ranks of the Paradine clan closing. Whatever they knew, whatever they suspected, whatever they felt, they had had enough; they were standing together suddenly and easing out the outsider, as Susan Marshall had just been eased from the room.

His glance caught his stepsister's eye and he saw her head move almost imperceptibly from side to side. She was signalling him to stand firm at all costs.

"I think not," Hero said, "if you will forgive me. The haunting of Paradine Hall by its too numerous spirits is far from settled. I will remind all of you of the condition under which I accepted this case: that I could not be dismissed from it until such time as I decided it was closed. That time is not yet. . . ."

MEANWHILE, Mark had gone in pursuit of Susan, hurrying after her along the path shaded with thorn bushes that led to the sunken garden.

Susan stopped on the path to face him. She was crying. "Let it be, Mark," she said. "I've been told off properly and well."

He said: "Blast Mother! I suppose it was a family affair as well that you have been frightened, threatened and bedevilled ever since you've been here."

"Then why didn't you say so?" Susan exclaimed, and was immediately sorry, for she laid a hand on his arm and said: "Oh, I'm sorry, Mark—that was unfair."

There was a marble bench set in the border of small, closely-bunched-together red and blue flowers. They sat on it side by side and Susan stirred the gravel moodily with her toe. She said: "I'm sorry, Mark, but something went wrong somewhere—dreadfully wrong. Not even Alexander Hero has been able to find out what it is. I don't think I want to stay here any longer. I don't believe in ghosts and spirits and that kind of thing, but I do think I believe in wickedness, Mark—and I don't like it."

Mark Paradine groaned. "If you'd only let me look after you, Susan. . . ."

Susan asked: "Can anyone protect anyone from hatred? Cannot you see how your mother dislikes me?"

Mark became suddenly changed and grim. He said: "I'm not asking you to marry my mother, I'm asking you to marry me."

Susan looked up at him in surprise. After a little she said with a note of melancholy in her voice which made it almost childlike: "It was going to be such a lovely summer. Why do you suppose it went wrong?"

Mark asked: "Susan, are you in love with Sir Richard Lockerie?"

"Dick? Oh no!" Her reply had come so swiftly and naturally that it surprised even Susan herself, who had not known that she was quite so sure. She was certain of it now.

"Is it Alexander Hero?" Mark asked.

"N-no, I don't think so. He's terribly attractive though, isn't he?"

"Yes, I'm afraid so."

"I don't think I could ever really learn to love a man like that," Susan said, half to herself, almost as though she were reviewing her thoughts out loud. "He doesn't really believe in anything—at least I'm sure he's never believed in me."

Mark then said: "I'm in love with you, Susan. I've asked you to marry me before—when it was too soon, perhaps, or the time wasn't right, or we didn't know one another. But now time has run out—suddenly, there isn't any left. I feel as though something dreadful might happen to you—that somehow, if we were one . . . if you would say that you cared for me and would marry me, I could stop it."

The girl looked at him out of troubled eyes, for she knew now that she loved him, and wished that it could be as he wanted. But she was human, and all the bitterness and hatred that had been directed at her ever since her coming to Paradine Hall stood between them. And the gulf between them was widened by the manner in which Lady Paradine had only a few moments before thrust her aside.

SHE etched another design in the gravel with her toe and said: "Oh, Mark, Mark—I wish you weren't a Paradine."

"Why?" he said sharply and suddenly. "What's wrong with being a Paradine?"

"Oh," Susan replied, startled, "I didn't mean . . . it's just that in our country we don't believe in hereditary titles, or—"

Mark asked: "Do you believe in families?"

"Of course I do," Susan said, "I love my family."

"I meant in the importance of families. In your country, families are not so very important—in mine they are."

Susan looked at the young man in astonishment. "Why," she said, "I do believe you're angry."

"Yes," he replied, "I am."

She said contritely: "Oh, Mark, I'm so sorry."

He said: "You needn't be. I don't ask you to be sorry. I am not saying that I am either proud or ashamed of my family—there have been times when I have been both—but we *are* the Paradines. We live in and own a little corner of England, and the Paradines have been a part of English history for a long time."

Susan was looking at him with dismay. She said: "Mark. Oh dear. . . ."

The young man went on: "Let's have this clear, Susan. I have loved you ever since I first laid eyes on you, but I like being a Paradine. I hope to be a good one. I was asking you to help me. That's about all I have to say."

And with that he arose and walked down the path, leaving Susan sitting there looking after him.

He was not yet out of sight when she was on her feet and calling after him: "Mark—oh Mark!"

He stopped and turned around to see her standing forlornly in the centre of the path, and there was no longer about her any of the self-confidence or cool assurance that had been the shell of Susan Marshall, but only a lonely and somewhat frightened girl.

He took slow, hesitating steps in her direction. It was hard for him to make his way back to her; it was harder for her to ask him to come. And yet they were young and in love.

"Mark," she said again, with a wistfulness that was quite new to her, "I've been told off again." And then she added in a lower voice: "But this time I liked it."

He came closer still, until only a few yards separated them, and they stood thus looking at one another across the gulf that a few moments before had appeared to be so unbridgeable.

"Mark," Susan whispered, "I'm glad you're a Paradine. Please—might I be one, too?"

ALEXANDER HERO took Mrs. Taylor's warning seriously. If there was any logic whatsoever in the course of events at the hall, an adventure in pyromania might be expected. There would be no fires set by Noreen; and the poltergeist in the west wing had been exploded—but what about the third ghost that still infested Paradine Hall?

Hero asked for and secured Lady Paradine's duplicate set of keys and embarked upon a minute and thorough exploration of the ancient manor from attics to the network of cellars, with particular attention to the latter.

He inspected the storerooms below floors, the laundry, the heating plant, wood and coal bins that opened off what seemed to be a mass of underground corridors.

As he went, he tried to familiarize himself with their direction and plan with reference to the rooms overhead and to remember where he was—now beneath the great hall of the Paradines, now under the drawing-room, the library, the music-room. . . .

One of the underground chambers was a well-stocked carpenter's shop, with lathe and drills, and it was here, Hero reflected, that Isobel practised her hobby and effected small repairs.

He saw nothing unusual about the place; it was neat and tidy. There were pieces of unused pine and cherrywood

"Harry! Get out of the punch . . ."

Too many ghosts

continued from previous page

of various sizes, planks, and some long fir rods; boxes of nails, screws, staples, and a set of tools that advertised competency.

In one room nearby there seemed to be nothing but oil paintings—portraits and other discarded subjects. He found his way to the wine cellars and the vegetable storage bins.

When he estimated that he was beneath the music-room, he was confronted with a locked door, but he located the key quickly and let himself in. This was a large enclosure illuminated by a single drop-light working off a switch by the door. It was half empty in spite of a considerable amount of furniture piled up around three sides—chests, tables upended, several tallboys and a number of chairs in the style known as Country Chippendale—not good enough to grace the rooms above. A careful examination of the room yielded nothing either alarming or interesting.

By the time he had finished, he was satisfied that nowhere had he come upon any evidence whatsoever of intended arson. Isobel ran her house not only efficiently but with intelligence, and apparently she was careful to avoid fire hazards. There were no piles of old newspapers or periodicals anywhere about, no heaps of rag or other dangerous and inflammable material.

Had Mrs. Taylor been merely a garrulous woman with an overheated imagination who had been trying to impress him? He remembered then the scene, her voice, the look of horror upon her face and the nausea it had inspired within him.

He knew a great deal by this time about the ghosts that had been disturbing this old family house—apparitions and cold winds and candles that went out of their own accord—but, try as he would, the pieces refused to fall into place or to make sense. And then there was still that damnable harp which had not been explained and which he could not explain.

He went off to Meg's room to talk things out with her. He found her with the print of the figure of the nun, examining it through a magnifying glass. He went and stood beside her, looking, and then asked: "Anything?"

Meg put down the magnifying glass with a gesture of exasperation and said: "I thought if I could only find *something*—some trifle we'd overlooked—perhaps it might give us a lead. But there's nothing. It's just damn bad luck."

Hero studied the photograph for a moment; it *was* bad luck that the one camera affected by the nun had had to be affixed at such an angle that it revealed nothing except the fact that threads are not tripped by disembodied shapes.

He said: "You've got an idea who's inside that thing, haven't you?"

She replied: "Yes."

"Who?"

"I'd rather not say."

HERO respected his stepsister's reticence. But she fell silent thereafter for so long that he asked finally: "What are you thinking, Meg?"

"That this house is filled with jealousies, tensions, vindictiveness, secret and not-so-secret loves, frustrations and desires—and some quite horrible people."

Hero nodded gloomily. "Yes," he said, "it's hell sorting them out, isn't it? This ring-around-a-rosy business—poor Beth hopelessly in love with Sir Richard, Sir Richard in love with Susan. . . ."

"Oh no!" said Meg decidedly. "Sir Richard in love with Beth."

Hero looked at his stepsister, startled. "With Beth!" he cried. "But it's Susan to whom he's been paying his attention ever since she's been here."

Meg said: "Oh, my Sandro, you are undoubtedly the greatest detector of bogus occult phenomena in the whole world—but when it comes to men and women in love. . . ."

"I don't see what that has to do with it."

She reached out her hand, cupped his chin in her palm and said wryly: "My dear innocent, if you at forty-two were in love with some fluffy young thing, and she had been taught to call you 'Uncle Alexander' and fetch rugs to put over your knees, and help you on with your overcoat, and there happened to be another attractive girl about, what would you do to demonstrate that there was some life in the old boy yet?"

Hero grinned. "Penny's dropped. But does it get us any for'arder?"

Meg looked disturbed. "What if it had worked too well and Beth were jealous and wanted to get rid of Susan . . . ?"

Hero whistled and then said: "Good lord! Beth, that gentle child?"

Meg said flatly: "No woman in love is gentle."

An echo of something in her voice made Hero look up at her sharply, but she was gazing down at the picture again.

"But would she destroy her home as well?" Hero said irritably. "Take what suspect you will—Freddie, Isobel, Lady Paradine, Beth—every case falls to pieces on that rock. There have been two separate and distinct motives in these hauntings—one has been to eliminate Susan Marshall, and the other to destroy the Paradine Country Club, from which all of them live."

He brooded for a time. Then he said: "That perishing harp—it always comes back to that! It is the only thing I can't solve logically."

Meg was watching him anxiously. She said: "I have a feeling that you will, Sandro."

He looked at her. "Then you don't believe it might be genuine?" he asked, almost hopefully.

Meg wished she could give him the encouragement he sought, but realized she must be honest. She said: "I don't know. I only know that whether it is genuine or not, you will find out before too long." A frown suddenly creased her brow and she said: "Sandro. . . ."

"Yes, pet."

"Sandro, I'm worried." She ran her fingers through her hair, twisting the strands in a characteristic gesture, and then commenced striding up and down the room trying to grasp and give expression to something she was feeling. She said: "I wasn't before, but I am now. What is going to happen, Sandro? Something, don't you feel? Something horrid! This house has suddenly become filled with it."

Hero looked at her. "You, too?" he said. "I wondered whether it was only myself. You see, I've been warned."

"Oh! By whom?"

"Mrs. Taylor. She laid out the Tarot for me."

Meg was looking at her stepbrother now, her eyes widely distended. "Sandro," she said, "I'm frightened for the first time. For you. . . ."

Hero said: "Never mind me, I can look after myself—but something is going to happen unless I can prevent it. Something or someone is going to try to destroy Susan Marshall, and I don't know who or where or how. I feel so helpless."

Meg went to him and put her arm in his. She said: "Don't be discouraged, Sandro. Don't give up. Try. Keep on trying. There's only you who can do it. I don't even seem to be able to help you any more."

Hero gave her shoulders a little squeeze and said: "Thanks, Meg." He bent over and brushed the top of her head with his lips and turned to leave.

She asked: "Where are you going?"

"Back to that confounded music room," he replied, and went out.

The music-room was becoming a kind of chamber of frustration to Alexander Hero. Each time he visited it he came away empty-handed—or rather, empty-minded, so to speak—and yet he was certain that somewhere in it lay the key to the puzzle and the secret of what was troubling him. One way or another, either as a genuine manifestation or a cruel hoax, the answer must lie within these four walls, for here it was that the harp was kept, and here that the impossible had happened.

FOR a time he concentrated upon the layout and contents to try to remember what it was that had troubled him once about them—some slight change, something he had forgotten. But whatever it had been, it would not float up into his consciousness, nor was it disturbing him now as he moved about from the piano to the shelves and music racks and the golden harp in its accustomed place by the window.

This time he laid the harp carefully on its side and went over it with magnifying glass and a small steel rod to tap for hollow places where hollow places should not be. He found none. On the underside of the sounding board he noticed a slight discoloration and a few scratches contained in about the area of a shilling-piece, but they did not appear to be indicative of anything.

He was beginning to feel the old sense of frustration again, something within him saying: *Give up, Hero. Whoever or whatever plays this harp does it without touching it.*

To calm his nerves he went over to the piano, opened and braced the lid, and sat down to play.

He struck the opening chords of the piano transcription of the Bach Toccata and Fugue in D Minor. He played well and soon was losing himself in the music.

For the moment he forgot Paradine Hall, the dangers and the problems that beset him. The fugue swelled and rolled, modulated, and then rose again in the climactic crescendo leading to the firm, thundering, satisfying chords with which Bach closed.

Hero sat at the piano with his eyes closed as the last of the sound died away. Then something caught his attention, which caused him to open them very quickly. He swung round on the piano stool and gazed at the harp hard and long. He arose and went over to it and stood there looking as though he could not get enough of looking and thinking about what had so suddenly struck him. Then he turned and ran from the room.

He ran downstairs to the store room beneath the music room and this time he gave it another thorough going over. When he had finished he thought he knew how the trick *might* be done.

But where is it? he asked himself. *Where would it be? Where would someone keep it—and who? It must be somewhere.*

Then began for him the most meticulous search he had ever bestowed on any premises. Once again he went over every bin, room and enclosure in the cellars, and the store rooms in the attics as well. He was aided in his hunt by the fact that the object he was looking for was large and unwieldy—so large that it would not be easy to conceal—and therefore he expected to find it if it was there.

By the time he had completed his work in cellars, attics and public rooms, the dinner bell had gone, which meant that shortly family and guests would foregather.

AFTER waiting half an hour to make sure they had all left their rooms, Hero began a thorough and shameless examination of the apartments of the Paradines, rooms both occupied and unoccupied, to which Lady Paradine's great cluster of keys gave him access.

He looked under every bed, into clothes presses and cupboards, and delved into broom closets and bathrooms large enough to hold the object he was seeking. Not satisfied with this, though he knew by now his chances were diminishing and he must hurry, he ranged through all of the guest rooms in the east wing and, to the astonishment and indignation of cook, butler and maidservants, pried into kitchen and pantry cupboards and recesses. Hero had no doubt that Huggins would report his actions to Isobel or to Lord Paradine himself, but he did not care.

He was not satisfied with going over the house alone; at that time of year it stayed light enough, and he sallied forth from the back of the manor and investigated stables and outhouses.

When in the end he had completed his search, he was exhausted, discouraged, and utterly defeated. There was no doubt in his mind—there was no possibility for that which he sought to be there. And if it was not, the theory that for a moment had given him such hope and excitement was of no avail. He was right back where he had started from, and no nearer any solution.

He went back to his room and flung himself on his bed, too tired even to think. He had a flask of brandy in his suitcase, and poured himself a double, felt better after he had drunk it, but no less chagrined and despondent.

It struck him that it was growing late, and that whatever danger threatened usually struck at night, and he had best be joining the others.

By the time he had dressed, it had grown dark. He went downstairs, passed through the conservatory—one

SMILES—3

What sunshine is to flowers, smiles are to humanity.

Joseph Addison

Answers to Everybody's Puzzling
See page 22

QUIZZLE

Quotation: "When all the world is young, lad, and all the trees are green." (Charles Kingsley).
Clue Down: The murders in the Rue Morgue.
Clues Across: (A) Twelfth; (B) Henna; (C) Entail; (D) Millet; (E) Usher; (F) Renfrew; (G) Deodar; (H) Elgar; (I) Riding; (J) Salsify; (K) Impromptu; (L) Nonage; (M) Tiler; (N) Hacienda; (O) Endor; (P) Raglan; (Q) Umbel; (R) Eft; (S) Mahomet; (T) Outré; (U) Rabelais; (V) Gastronome; (W) Undergrad; (X) Evergreen.

FRED BORDERS'S BRAIN TEASER

If Tom has been on the sea X months, Dad's present experience is 4X months. Two months ago Dad's experience was 4X − 2 months, and Tom's X − 2 months So 5 times X − 2 equals 4X − 2, from which it can be deduced that X equals 8. Now if Y is the number of months Tom must wait, by the time he gets his dinghy he will have been on the sea 8 + Y months, and Dad 32 + Y months. Hence 3 times 8 + Y equals 32 + Y. And Y is 4.

small lamp was switched on at the back and the new window glass had not been set in its frame—and so out on to the lawn. It was a mild night and by the light of the lanterns which the men working on the drains had hung on the rails guarding their excavated ditch, family and guests were having coffee. Hero joined the table at which Meg and Mrs. Taylor were sitting.

It was shortly after this that the apparition appeared to the stunned onlookers on the lawn, and Alexander Hero came close to losing his life.

Seated at the table drinking coffee, Hero noticed again the single lamp burning in the conservatory, throwing dim light and illuminating the room somewhat like a dark theatrical set. He wondered briefly why it was burning, and then forgot about it.

THE moon had not yet risen. Scents from the sunken garden nearby were carried by a warm, gentle night breeze, and mingled with the tang of salt from the nearby tidal marshes. The scene had all the aspects of a simple and innocent kind of country evening outdoors; there were flashes of jewellery, bare arms, white shirt fronts, the glow of cigars, and subdued talk—and yet there was murder in the air.

Lord and Lady Paradine sat with Sir Richard and Isobel. The young people —Beth, Susan, Mark and Freddie— were together. The Wilsons were by themselves at the far edge of the group. Dr. Paulson, Jellicot and Ellison made up a men's table. Hero noted that only the Spendley-Carters were absent.

To Hero the oppression that had settled itself within Paradine Hall seemed to have moved outside with all of the inhabitants. Mrs. Taylor suddenly shuddered and said, "I know it's hot, but I'm chilled."

Hero said, "Let me get you a scarf."

Mrs. Taylor said, "Would you? You're a pet. You know where my room is—there's one over the chair, a white one. I meant to bring it with me."

"Have it for you in a jiffy," Hero said, and got up quietly and left. At that moment the butler, with the coffee tray, and his wife with accessories of cream and sugar, emerged from the doorway, followed by Spendley-Carter, and crossed on the nearest board bridge that had been laid across the ditch. Hero decided to go the other way, and went around behind the group seated in the darkness, and into the east wing by its own entrance, out of sight and earshot of those on the lawn.

At the table Mrs. Taylor suddenly turned to Meg and said, "Why has he gone? He oughtn't to have gone."

Meg said, not quite understanding, "He went to fetch your scarf."

Mrs. Taylor said, "But we oughtn't to have allowed him to go, don't you see?" She half arose from the table, as though meaning to call Hero back, but he had vanished. She sat down.

Meg felt a surge of uneasiness. "Why, what's happened? Anything wrong?" she said.

The expression had faded from Mrs. Taylor's countenance and she said, "Eh? What a nice young man. How stupid of me to forget my scarf. Yes, I'll have coffee, please—white. . . ."

No one really could remember afterwards when it began, when it was first seen, or exactly what happened thereafter; many were engrossed in conversation. But the signal seemed to have been given by the sudden shock of a piercing scream emitted by Mrs. Wilson, followed by her cry of, "Oh my God! Look!" followed by a second scream, "Alexander!" And then there was the crash of an overturning table.

For a moment there was utter confusion, with no one seemingly knowing where to look. People rose from their chairs and then saw that Vivyan Wilson, her face sheet-white, her eyes distended with terror, was pointing at the conservatory, where Alexander Hero seemed to be in the grip of some scaly, monstrous horror risen from the Pit, and which had him in its toils.

There was no question as to the apparition being imaginative or hallucinatory, for they all saw it—a monstrous head with two cold, goggling eyes, horrid corrugated proboscis like the trunk of an elephant, and the long, glittering, dead-white body of a serpent.

MEG cried, "Sandro! Sandro!" She was on her feet and straining towards him, but, paralysed by what she saw, unable to move. The foulness —demon, fiend, or whatever it was— had her stepbrother in its toils, the scaly body wound about one arm, the rank, venomous head and staring eyes a few inches from his own.

To the cries and screams of the women were added the crashing of chinaware and silver as more tables were overturned, and the shouts of the men.

The paralysing immobility was broken as Major Wilson reached inside his jacket and produced a dark object which glittered momentarily as he raised his hand and pointed it towards the figures in the conservatory.

At that instant Meg too came to life and her anguished cry of "Sandro! Sandro—look out!" topped all the others. But her dash across the lawn towards the Major came too late. There followed the stunning explosion of the heavy pistol in his hand. There was a *spang* and a shattering of glass into a thousand pieces; and Hero was seen lying face downwards on the floor.

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NEXT WEEK: Terror takes command at Paradine Hall

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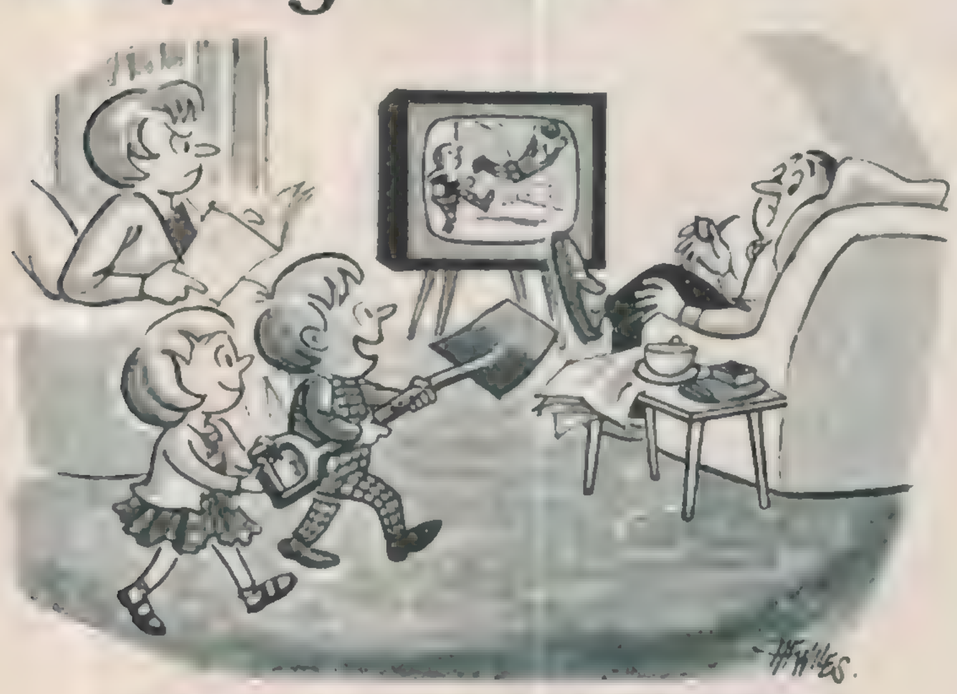

"You hadn't lent your spade after all, Daddy. It was under a big pile of sacks in the potting shed"

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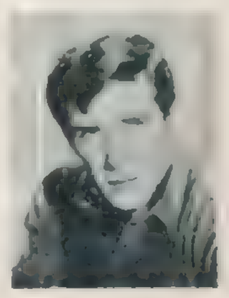

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Men are all alike

continued from page 18

better fitted to tame a blackmailer. I remember once in Secunderabad. . . ."

There followed a somewhat involved story about an anonymous letter writer, whose malice had caused two suicides. The nub of the story was that, although the police had been baffled, Chubby had not, and that, thanks to his vigorous action, all had come right in the end. Bedelia knew that Chubby was worrying lest, in his fumbling old age, he was going to fail Dorcas in the hour of her need.

The short stay at The Grange did much for Dorcas's morale. She knew that her guardian would not be a very effective champion in her predicament, but her comfort came from the warming knowledge that the old soldier, even if he used outmoded weapons, would fight for her until death. There were not many people of whom she could say the same. She was tired of the slick people who over-simplified problems they were not prepared to face.

Dorcas heard nothing more from the blackmailer until after her return from being inspected by the Duke and Duchess of Camberwell at their splendid country seat where, subtly, she was made to feel that, as Charlie was a second son and not therefore the heir, his choice of a bride was not a matter of great consequence. Having satisfied themselves that she was housebroken, knew which implements to use at table and did not shake hands with the butler, they appeared to lose interest. In a brief heart-to-heart talk with the Duchess over a cocktail in the boudoir, Dorcas was given to understand that Charlie had brought other girls down for inspection, none "quite suitable."

"Charlie is a dear boy," explained the older woman, "but emotionally unstable. My advice to you is to hold out for a long engagement . . . if it really comes to that. Then you will know it is no flash in the pan."

No official announcement of the engagement had been made, but the chit-chat columnists intimated pretty plainly that this would not be long delayed. Then the blackmailer phoned again. Dorcas, with the tape-recorder running, kept him on the line as long as possible so as to make the identification by voice easy. Letting him believe that she was frightened, she agreed to wait for another call and to keep any rendezvous made.

With the help of George Carliss and the studio staff, the would-be blackmailer was soon identified. Three people recognized him as a dark-room worker—which explained how he had obtained a set of prints—dismissed some months previously for drunkenness.

Although British courts, except in certain circumstances, will not permit the use of tape-recordings as evidence, there was no doubt that, if called upon to do so, the police would act. The blackmailer, whose name was Smith, was traced to mean lodgings in the Notting Hill district of West London, and there matters stood until Dorcas should hear from him again with a definite blackmail threat. Dorcas herself, feeling the strain of waiting, went down to The Grange for the weekend.

The General, when he heard the story, was profoundly shocked. Despite his wife's protests and Dorcas's pleadings, he announced his unshakable intention of calling upon the miserable Smith armed with a loaded riding crop.

"I refuse to allow you to return home to your flat," he told Dorcas, "to sit there, waiting like a tethered goat being used as tiger-bait, for this fellow to telephone you with his disgusting demands. I am your guardian and I should be wanting in my duty if I allowed you to be subjected to any more. It's unthinkable."

This was a Friday evening. On the Saturday morning, with his riding crop wrapped in old newspapers, the General caught the early London train. Indignation helped him to shed the weight of his years. Blue eyes blazing, white moustache bristling, his fierce demeanour was enough to strike terror into the heart of any malefactor.

When Dorcas, fearful for the consequences to the old soldier, wanted to accompany him, it was Bedelia who restrained her. "Don't you see, my dear," said this wise and understanding old woman, "he must go, if not for your sake, for his own. It is stronger than he is, for not to go would be, as he sees it, to fail in a trust."

Dorcas went to her own room, there to take refuge in tears.

The General made his triumphal return shortly before dinnertime, making light of the whole affair. "As one might expect of a blackmailer, the man turned out to be a lily-livered cur," he reported. "I didn't even have to hit him. Handed me the photos when I showed him this"—he waved the riding crop—"I wasn't there more than five minutes."

"Where are the photos?" asked his wife.

"Here they are, my dear, safely in this envelope. While you're pouring me a whisky-and-soda, I'll put them in the garden incinerator."

"Chubby," bellowed Bedelia, "you'll do nothing of the kind. If there's any burning to be done, let Dorcas do it. I insist upon seeing them. . . ."

"I'd prefer that you didn't, my dear," said the General, his face suffused with a deep blush. "I had to see them, merely to verify what was in the envelope but, I tell you frankly, I wish it had not been necessary. And I don't mind telling you, my dear"—he turned to Dorcas—"that I'm horrified . . . yes, mystified and horrified, that in such a state of undress you permitted yourself to be seen and photographed by a lot of gawping yahoos. If your Aunt Bedelia wants to see them, I hope she will respect my wishes by doing so in the privacy of her own room. And now"—he marched towards the door, leaving the envelope on the arm of his chair—"I am going off to wash and brush-up before dinner. When I return, let it be understood here and now, we will make no further reference to this distasteful subject."

"They truly aren't as bad as all that," whispered Dorcas when the old soldier had left the room. "It was just that I would have been horribly ashamed to have seen them reproduced in magazines. See for yourself, Aunt Bedelia, and you'll understand."

The old woman spent two or three whole minutes studying the photos before she spoke. "Yes," she said at length, "I suppose it would be rather embarrassing to have them staring at you from every newspaper stand. But"—her eyes and voice were wistful—"to have a figure like yours, my dear, one would be prepared to endure—at least, I would—a horrifying amount of embarrassment. I was built on more substantial lines. . . . Still, my dear," she went on, a warm smile lighting her face, "that's one worry the less for you. Let's hope you never have a greater."

There was great excitement at The Grange when, at the General's insistence, Lord Charles ffolliot-ffoulkes made a formal call on the General, as Dorcas's guardian, to ask for her hand. The General took a firm stand on the matter of a proper marriage contract and settlement, and went on to say: "I should be a great deal happier about it all, my boy, if you were to learn to do something useful. Being the son of a duke is an accident of fate, rather than an occupation, and we mustn't lose sight of the possibility that if these damned Socialists get the upper hand again, there won't be much future in being a duke."

SMILES—4

Smiles are smiles only when
the heart pulls the wire.

Theodore Winthrop

A bottle of champagne was opened, to celebrate the event and that was that. Dorcas's future seemed to have been arranged to everyone's satisfaction. Charlie and Dorcas returned to London, while the placid life at The Grange slipped back into its normal groove.

The first hint of a rift in the lute to reach The Grange was a gossip-column item reporting the arrival on the French Riviera of Lord Charles ffolliot-ffoulkes. No mention of Dorcas. The next was a splendid action photo of Charlie on water skis, travelling at high speed, with a scantily clad girl sitting on his shoulders, her elegant legs clasping his torso. The girl was identified as "Mlle. Mireine Pontarlier, of the Folies Bergère, whose sensational success at the Monte Carlo Summer Casino is the talk of the Riviera."

"I don't think," observed the General, with the understatement of which he was an acknowledged master, "that Dorcas will be too well pleased by this. Let's hope she doesn't see it."

"My dear Chubby," said Bedelia witheringly, "kind friends will send her at least a dozen copies."

"Yes, I suppose so," her husband assented gloomily. "She's a smashing little filly, isn't she? Well, all things considered, I dare say Dorcas is well out of it. But, you know"—he held the offending magazine at arm's length, the better to admire the picture—"you've got to hand it to Charlie that he knows how to pick 'em. . . ."

"Put that down, you lascivious old goat," bellowed Bedelia in one of her rare bursts of anger. "Dorcas needs help, while all you do is sit there gloating over the picture of this Parisian chippy. You profess to be fond of the child . . . well, prove it."

Dorcas herself arrived at The Grange that evening, her eyes red with weeping. "Don't take on so, my dear," said the General in an attempt to be helpful. "There are more fish in the sea, you know, and if you ask me you're well rid of him."

"But I love him, Uncle Chubby. I love him," wailed Dorcas. "I've sent back the ring and . . . I'm so unhappy I'd like to find a hole and crawl into it. It's so unkind, so humiliating."

Dorcas went off to bed, unable to face any more sympathy.

"If you think it will do any good," the General offered hopefully, "I'm prepared to go down to the Riviera with a horsewhip. . . ."

"You'll do nothing of the kind, Chubby," Bedelia said firmly. "I don't want to see photos of you on water-skis with half-naked girls steering you by the whiskers."

On the evening of the fourth day after Dorcas arrived, a long raking sports car pulled up at The Grange, and from it stepped Charlie.

Charlie found Dorcas picking forget-me-nots on the river bank. Chubby, watching from the garden flat, maintained a blow-by-blow running commentary for Bedelia's benefit. Dorcas at first was unfriendly, and turned her back on Charlie. But Charlie, using a half-nelson, managed to get the ring back on the correct finger. . . .

Then from the window came a shout: "Charlie's in the river. Looks as if the fool can't swim . . . no, no, it's all right, he's only stuck in the mud. He's out and climbing up the bank. They've gone into a clinch. Damn! They've gone behind a clump of bushes . . . and anyway, the light's fading."

How Charlie made his peace with Dorcas and how she responded are, surely, nothing to do with us. Suffice to say that by midnight, when Charlie's clothes were dry enough to wear, and he had driven off to London, all had been forgiven and forgotten.

With considerable pressure brought to bear by Charlie, the Duke and Duchess agreed to the advancement of the wedding date. The happy pair were duly married in early September at St. Bartholomew's Church, Totterdell-on-Thames. The reception was held at The Grange afterwards.

It was a truly splendid affair, which almost bankrupted the General. The bridal couple disappeared in a cloud of confetti to catch the night plane for East Africa. The honeymoon was a costly safari, the gift of the groom's mother.

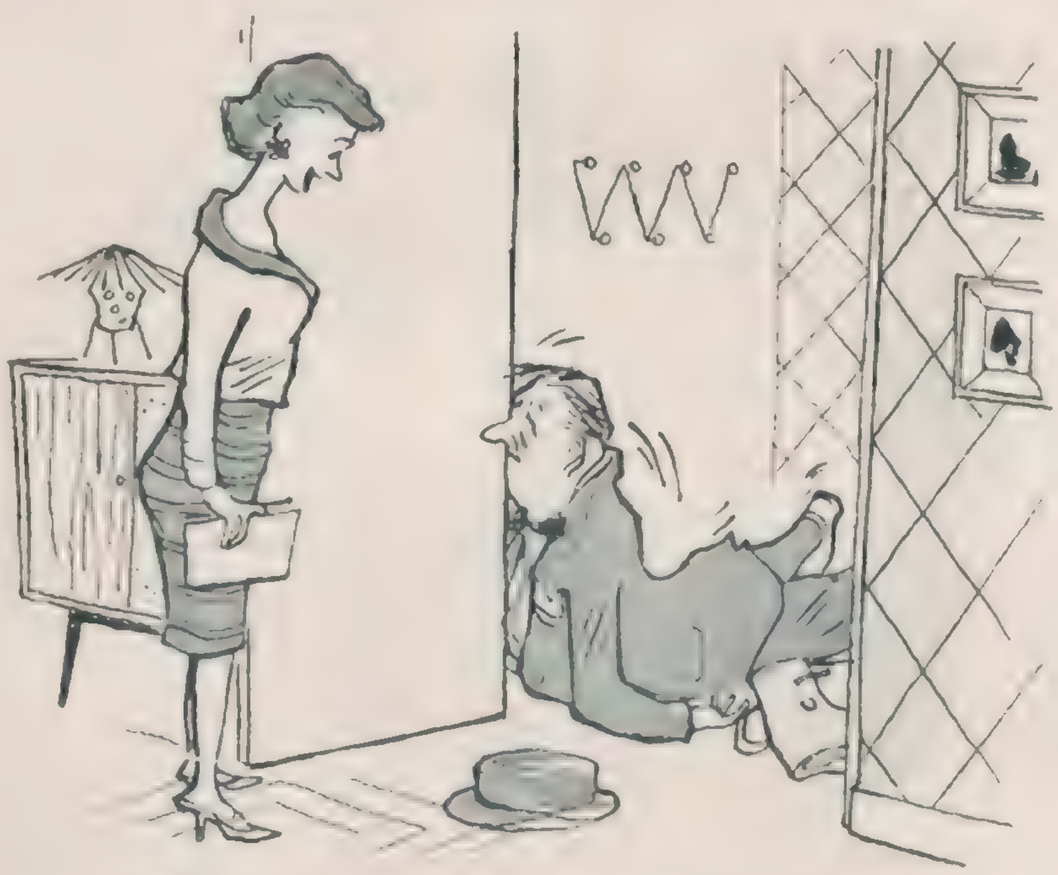
Peace—peace a trifle tinged with sadness — descended upon The Grange. "I don't mind admitting now," said the General from the depths of an easy chair, "that my biggest surprise was when Charlie came back from the Riviera. That little French filly was a smasher. . . ."

"I wasn't going to allow poor Dorcas to be humiliated like that," replied Bedelia. "I made sure that Charlie came back in a hurry. . . ."

"*You* made him come back?" asked the General incredulously. "What in blue blazes did you have to do with it?"

"Everything!" replied Bedelia mistily. "You great stupid lummox, Chubby. I air-mailed him the set of photos of Dorcas in the uplift garments . . . which you wanted to put in the incinerator. That's what brought him back. Bah! You men are all alike . . . no originality!"

THE END



"Did you see the new mat I put by the front door?"

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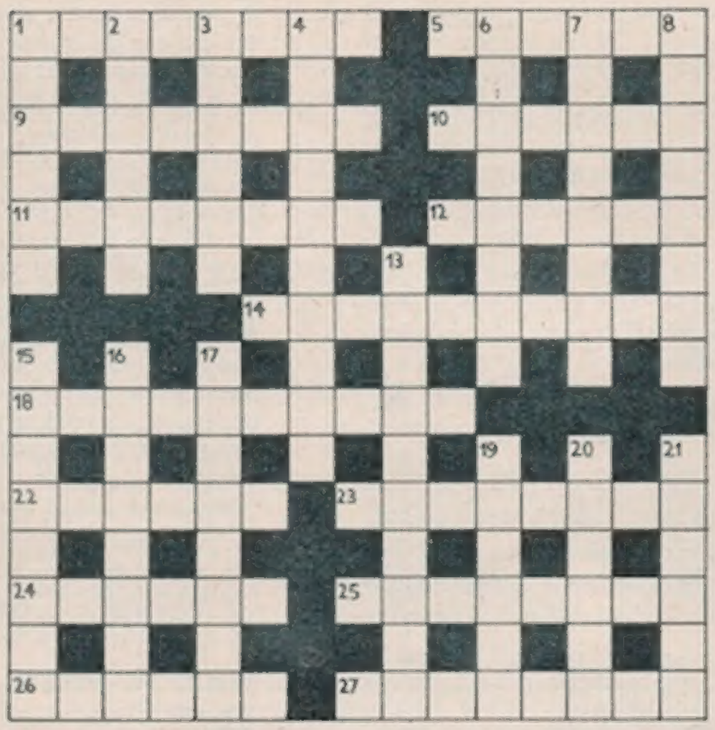
THE LESLIE STOKES CROSSWORD (No. 11)

Prizes of one-guinea Book Tokens will be given for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries must be marked "Crossword No. 11" on the envelope and must be posted to reach this office (John Bull, 189 High Holborn, London, W.C.1) by Tuesday, January 26. No correspondence can be entered into about this puzzle.



ACROSS

1. Conventional way to make a friend. (8)
5. An overhead of that small church. (6)
9. Economize on romance, one might say, lacking affection. (8)
10. Wine often tapped by boxers. (6)
11. Uplifted as a Derby winner. (8)
12. The saving a threepenny-piece shows. (6)
14. So greasing, oddly, could start a quarrel. (10)
18. Suggestion of rasher bet to make a game of it. (10)
22. To so dislike makes Edward turn against a peculiar set. (6)
23. Material that finds bosses at variance. (8)
24. Learned, but lacking a pound. (6)
25. Discussion about help to the clan. (8)
26. Pitch that gives punters a chance. (6)
27. Window not so high as it sounds. (8)

DOWN

1. Bird found in beautiful marshland. (6)
2. Famous rider to esteem. (6)
3. A flower at its best. (6)
4. Males going to defeat. (6, 4)
6. Only one stocking? (4-4)
7. Artificer loses his head in a mess; it's horrifying! (8)
8. Piece of furniture that could hold up the bowlers. (8)
13. A handle for the sweep. (10)
15. Following instructions, I'd been to change. (8)
16. How Mac got off. (4-4)
17. Fragile container. (8)
19. Learnt about a living charge. (6)
20. Hang round back street. (6)
21. As despatched by agreement. (6)

SOLUTION TO CROSSWORD NO. 9

ACROSS : 1, S, Follow-my-leader. 9, Numerous. 10, Latvia. 12, Uneven. 13, Competes. 15, Off the record. 18, Illustration. 23, Secluded. 24, Stanza. 26, Isobar. 27, Farewell. 28, Kitten. 29, Scullery.
DOWN : 1, Fungus. 2, Limpet. 3, Ourself. 4, Maul. 6, Example. 7, Devotion. 8, Rhapsody. 11, Novelty. 14, Starred. 16, Dipstick. 17, Black-out. 19, Sausage. 20, Oatmeal. 21, Sneeze. 22, Waylay. 25, Talc.

WINNERS OF CROSSWORD NO. 7

Mrs. C. A. Malcolm, 17 Butterfield Avenue, Templeogue, Co. Dublin
Mrs. M. Balkham, 44 Parkhurst Road, Bexhill, Sussex.
Mr. A. D. Stratton, 211 Long Lane, Grays, Essex.

Alan Whicker

continued from page 7

fast ones, don't you? Like, 'But don't *you* ride roughshod over people?' Now that man will have a job crawling out from under that stone, won't he?"

"I don't really think so," said Whicker. "You can't have a chorus of agreement. That's bad television. If I say to him, 'You are obviously very concerned about the well-being of people in this town?' he is going to say: 'Yes, I am.' Where does that get you? Or the viewer? But if I say to him: 'Don't you think your relations with the public have been inept?' then he can make his point."

Mushy or tough?

"That's a very special *Tonight* story, isn't it?" I said. "The little man up against the big boys? You're particularly fond of those, aren't you?"

"Yes, except that I don't necessarily take the little man's side. Take a redevelopment story I did some time ago. I did tell ordinary people: 'You complain about the place being an eyesore and now the council does something about it and you still complain.' I don't think I am being mushy with the little man and tough with the big man. I try to be brisk with both. . . ."

"You are not so much interested in facts as in people's attitude to facts?"

"That's right. The way they feel about it is much more important than the thing itself."

"Is there on *Tonight* a kind of story which has a Whicker label?"

"Yes, I think so, but it's hard to say, because I try to be versatile. I might do a Teddy Boy story but also deal with child gardeners. I started on *Tonight* by doing off-beat stories all the time—spivs in Oxford Street, bunko boys, marriage bureaux and private detectives and so on. I did a story about a walking club which was a terrific success. I went out with them and talked to them while they were walking. Now we seem to go in more for the one interview piece, like the recent one about the London statue cleaner. They move in phases. I like to think that I can do a strong interview with Krishna Menon."

"Not your favourite character?"

"He was difficult and obviously dialectically and mentally the superior of any interviewer. That makes you realize your own inadequacies."

"The picture one gets is that you aren't much good with intellectuals. Is that because you are not a highbrow?"

"Might be true. I don't know. Sometimes there is the job you instinctively feel did not come off. That happened recently with Peter Sellers. Didn't come off at all. It so often happens with people like that—they are performers and they forget that we haven't too much time. Sellers was just coming to life when I had to say: 'Thank you, Mr. Sellers.' That's infuriating. . . ."

"What do you think viewers expect from you? Effect or information?"

'Now that's TV'

Whicker put the tips of his fingers together and pondered.

"I never think about that you know. Not seriously. I think of the overall effect of what I am doing. When it comes to a railway porter who eats glass and breathes fire for instance, it's much more important that he should come off than I. There I was on a railway station and I wanted to smoke but did not have a match. So I turned to the porter and said: 'Have you got a match?' He said: 'Yes, sure,' and *ssshhh*—just let go a sheet of flame three feet long. Now that's television. It was marvellous."

I recalled Whicker's St. Tropez story, when he was talking to people on the beach and the camera got bored and began following up bikini girls. "Did you think of that one?"

"That's hard to answer. It sort of generates."

"Did you have a director?"

"I have a cameraman and a sound man with me, but no director.

"Now that's a thing that most people don't know. On those world tours, for instance, there were just the three of us. Other programmes have a whole crowd. We just got a round-the-world flight at a thousand pounds a head and we were off. I did about sixty stories in each tour.

How he does it

"So when people tell me what a wonderful life I have all I can say is that I nearly get a nervous breakdown. Interviewing's just a small part of it. You arrive in Singapore dead beat, read about the place, think of the story. You've got five days and you need five stories. Each time you've got to plan, organize, do the story and direct it.

"I remember Manila, for instance. We talked stories and decided to do one on going down the rapids first. We drove sixty miles and spent the whole day going up and down the river. That night we did the pelota game in the stadium. Next morning we did that marvellous mayor, Arsenio Lacson. I'll never forget asking him whether he meant what he said on a notice outside his office door, 'Please leave your guns here.' He said: 'Sure. . . . We lost a damn good city treasurer before we put that notice up'."

"Most people," I said, "probably have a Whicker favourite. Mine's the piece with the Australian Teddy Boy."

Whicker's hands rubbed rapidly together in gleeful reminiscence. "Wasn't he marvellous? I wanted to do something about bodgies and widgies, the Australian variety of Teddy Boy and Girl. It wasn't easy. Then the police told us about this one and we met him. For the first hour he answered everything in monosyllables. I worked on him for three hours—some really slit-eyed business. I knew what I wanted and he knew it, too. Then I started narking him a bit.

"You think you're tough. You've got a lot of charm, you've got a good brain, but you are a bum, aren't you?" So he flared up.

"The main thing in television interviewing is knowing when not to talk, when to wait that extra three seconds that will make him say something else. At one stage he said: 'Well, we had a party at the house that lasted three days.' Pause. 'When they left they set fire to the house.' Pause. 'I took it as a joke myself.' Pause. 'Can't see why the firemen didn't.' Now I could have cut any of those and lost the lot."

"It looked as though he was going to knife you any second."

"That's how it looked to me—and that would have been marvellous television, too. He was a tough but I liked him. You get involved with people, you know."

"I suppose it was your training as a Fleet Street reporter that made you able to get on with people and things abroad, and find your way around?"

. . . and no trousers

"Very much so. Take luggage, for instance. I have long learned to take only one suitcase with me wherever I go. You can't lose one, but if you have two you're sure to leave one behind somewhere. I remembered when I was covering one of the royal tours I had the bright idea to keep all my jackets in one case and all my trousers in the other. Inevitably, by the time the Queen arrived I was left with six jackets and no trousers."

"The viewer gets the impression that you go all over the world with one suit of clothes, well-pressed, of course, but still one suit. Is that so?"

Whicker looked at the plain, straight-up-and-down coat hanging by his desk. "Not really. Perhaps I have one style of clothes. To tell the truth I don't think much about it, except that I don't hold with these TV people who appear in dirty mufflers and rumpled shirts. I keep on thinking that I am a guest in people's living-rooms and that I owe them the small courtesy of looking decently dressed."

Tell-tale voice

Whicker has an unusually classless voice, curiously silky, with a wide range of tell-tale inflexions to show disapproval, amusement, curiosity. If something annoys or angers him, his voice gets even more silky and smooth, almost glacial. Did he cultivate all this?

"I honestly never think about it."

"Do people *ever* refuse to talk to you?"

"Of course. Why shouldn't they? There was a man in Corby New Town who wouldn't come near the camera. Then again, there was a story at Keighley in Yorkshire where the local council threw old age pensioners out of the local club because they played housey-housey: the officials wouldn't talk."

"Another thing that strikes the viewer is that most of your stories have got a moral, a twist in the tail, a sort of 'Well, I'll be darned' sort of ending. Do you dream those up yourself?"

"I like a story to have a beginning, a middle and an end, or a gag ending that leaves the viewer up instead of down. Like the story about the pearl farm in Japan where, at the end, I stood in front of a mountain of pearls, looked into the camera, plunged my hand right into the pearls and said: 'I've always wanted to have a little farm. . . .'"

"What about money?"

"I don't do too badly. I have a pleasant flat, a Bentley—not one of the new ones—and a good life on the whole. I could have much more, I suppose. Like all of us on *Tonight* I have had gorgeous offers from the other network. But it wouldn't be the same."

"Do you get time to do anything else? Read, for instance?"

"Travel books, dictionaries and airline schedules. That seems to be my lot. That reminds me: I have to look up the times for Beirut." THE END

Readers seeking advice from our team of experts are invited to send their problems to the John Bull Free Advice Service, 189 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. Letters will be answered by post, and problems of general interest will also be published on this page

We advise . . .

HAVE I any redress against the owners of cars which are parked day and night outside my house? When I complained to the man next door he threatened me with a solicitor's letter if I mentioned it to him again.—Mrs. A. J., Birmingham.

● Unless these cars prevent you from having access to your property or you are continually being disturbed by the noise of engines at night you do not appear to have any redress.

If they are causing this kind of nuisance you can apply to court for an injunction against the owners.

BITTER SUITE

MY neighbours bought a three-piece suite, advertised as genuine moquette, but after fourteen months, when it was used very little, the pile has worn off the arms and the backs of the seats. The manufacturers say nothing can be done, as the year's guarantee has expired. The store manager has offered to pay half the cost of re-covering the suite if they buy thirty yards of material from the store. Have they any redress for this swindle?—L. H., Leeds, 16.

● Your neighbours cannot succeed in a claim as the guarantee has expired. If they had complained as soon as they noticed the material was wearing badly they might have claimed successfully.

AERIAL COMBAT

I bought a TV set and had an engineer install it. The aerial he put up has had to be replaced in position twice. The first time he did it free, but for the second has sent me a bill for £2 5s. Must I pay?—W. R. S., Hallavington, Wilts.

● If the aerial was not securely fixed in a proper workmanlike manner in the first place it is the contractor's liability to pay for such rectification.

STOP THAT SHEET

I POSSESS an actual road test sheet for use in the car by the testing officer. I am thinking of having several thousand printed and sold at 1s. How do I stand legally?—J. G. L., Prestbury, Cheshire.

● The sheet is likely to be copyright and if so you could not safely reproduce it without the consent of the author.

POSTING THE STITCHER

MY brother and his wife emigrated to Nigeria and they want me to ship them their sewing machine. What regulations cover the export of this kind of article?—E. U., Bacup, Lancs.

● The sewing machine can be sent abroad without a permit or licence of any kind. Have it expertly packed.

PREMIUM OF DEATH

IF I die can my brother or my sister claim a prize should one of my premium bonds come up?—C. H., Mevagissey, Cornwall.

● If you are alive the day the draw is made, the prize will be paid to your estate. If you die before the day of the draw your bonds are no longer eligible for a prize.

NO RENT—NO HOUSE

I LIVE rent free in a house on a working tenancy, caretaking and keeping the grounds of a big house. Now I have been given two months' notice so that a farmworker can have the house. What can I do until I obtain alternative accommodation?—J. A. L., Rochester, Newcastle upon Tyne.

● You are only a tenant at will and as no legal tenancy has been created by your employer, you can be compelled to quit.

WILL TO READ

WILL you please tell me whether a will can be made with a ball-point pen? Would it be valid?—N. P., Hindley Green, nr. Wigan, Lancs.

● The type of pen used in drafting a will does not in any way affect its validity.

It can be written in ink, pencil or be typed, provided it is legible.

TRANSFERABLE BONDS?

CAN one transfer premium bonds from father to son without altering the waiting period of six months before being able to participate in the draw?—N. F., Bognor Regis.

● Premium bonds are not transferable from one person to another.

OUT OF THE BLUE

A FIRM wrote to me saying that I agreed to buy goods worth £6 and had already paid a deposit of £1, the rest to be sent monthly. I immediately wrote back and said that this was the first I had heard of such a thing. They have not answered me. What will I do if they take this further?—Mrs. P. E., Manchester.

● At present do nothing. Probably a mistake has been made. If you are pressed ask for a copy of the order.

Someone could have given the order in your name and if you are told that your signature appears on the original order contact a solicitor.

MISSING—ONE COAT

MY son's raincoat was stolen from his school cloakroom. The headmaster told him to look for it, but has done nothing else. What can we do?—N. B. D., Ammanford, Carmarthen.

● Unless the school authorities were negligent in any way you could not succeed in a claim against them.

You should press the headmaster to make investigations, but without evidence of negligence you cannot do much more.

CONE OF DANGER

WHAT action can I take against my neighbour to make him do something about dangerous fir trees on the edge of his property? In gales they are a threat to my house, as they are top-heavy and may be blown down.—F. B., Kilkeel, Co. Down.

● If an expert will say the trees are dangerous you can take legal action, on the grounds that your neighbour is allowing a nuisance to exist.

A solicitor's letter may be effective, but if not you will have to apply for a court injunction.

NO GOOD GARDENER

A YEAR ago we moved into a new house and along came a landscape gardener who said he would lay turf and plant shrubs. We paid him a deposit of £3, but despite a phone call and a letter he never turned up to do the work. Is he legally bound to do it?—Mrs. J. S. E., Llanishen, Cardiff.

● You cannot force him to do the work. You can only cancel the order and reclaim the £3.

A PRIVATE OATH

WHAT is the procedure followed at magistrates' courts when information regarding an indictable offence is laid on oath by a citizen? — Mrs. A. G. T., Anglesey.

● You will have to attend at the beginning of the session (before the general cases are heard); tell the clerk of your intention and fill in the required form, which you will be required to swear on oath or affirm.

The magistrates will consider the matter and issue a summons or a warrant.

It's a simple procedure, but you must be prepared to give a precise statement of the nature of the charge.

Worth Noting

ROGER SMITHELLS keeps practical homelovers up to date

▶ **New shampoo spray:** Hair washing is simplified with the new Pompette shampoo spray which can be linked up in a moment to the ordinary wash-basin taps. A 4-ft. length of light rubber tubing is fitted with patent nozzle connections to fit over hot and cold taps.

There are no metal parts to rust and the spray is available in a choice of pink, white, blue or green, to team up with your colour scheme.

From ironmongers, hardware and department stores and chemists, price 12s. 6d. By the New Croydon Rubber Co., Ltd., 36 Mitcham Lane, Streatham, London, S.W.16.

▶ **New plastic-backed adhesive tape:** Designed primarily for joining plastic and rubber-backed carpets or other lightweight carpets —together with a host of other household uses, Tuftape plastic-backed adhesive does not require to be "ironed on," as it adheres easily on contact.

Available in grey, black, red, brown, green or blue, price 1s. per yard from hardware shops, ironmongers and all good department stores. By Copydex, Ltd., 1 Torquay Street, London, W.2.

▶ **Rustless roasting pan:** A new self-basting oval roasting pan of seamless aluminium, which will hold a 3½-4½ lb. chicken is now marketed by Prestige.

The cover keeps the oven clean while roasting is in progress, and a dimpled finish collects condensation which drips back on to the roast and bastes it.

Handles have been set to take up as little space as possible and the overall size is 12 in. by 8¼ in. by 5 in. The price is 22s. 6d.

▶ **1960 refrigerator:** A versatile new refrigerator is the Main No. 24, an absorption model with a shelf area of 5.4 sq. ft. Available in white or cream, the overall dimensions are 36 in. high by 21 in. square.

The pale blue one-piece plastic lining is easy to clean and the space on the inside of the door will hold seven eggs, four pints of milk as well as other sundries. In the ice-making compartment there are two ice-cube trays each holding ten cubes, and with the trays removed there is enough storage space for 2½ lb. of frozen foods.

To make sure that the cabinet will stand evenly four levelling screws are provided for kitchens where floors are uneven. Price £43 16s.

By R. A. Main, Ltd. (Electrical Division), 48 Grosvenor Gardens, London, S.W.1.

▶ **Decorate with tiles:** New polystyrene tiles, suitable for sticking to a kitchen or bathroom wall, come in a range of ten solid colours, seven pearl and four marbled effects.

These tiles are unaffected by moderate heat but should not be used behind or around combustion stoves, gas cookers or fireplaces. They will adhere to any reasonable surface which is dry and flat and can even be applied on top of an already glazed tiled wall.

To fix them in position, Ejecta adhesive is recommended. Ejecta tiles are hard wearing and only require a wipe over with warm soapy water—abrasive cleaners or petrol must not be used. Turps or turps substitute will remove stains, but must be washed off afterwards. By James Halstead, Ltd., Crow Oak Works, Whitefield, Manchester.

▶ **Inexpensive hand cleaner:** Grimy hands are every handyman's problem. A new hand cleaner, Swarfega, will obligingly remove oil, paint or engrained grime. It is non-abrasive, emollient and antiseptic. Sold in tubes at 1s. 4d.; or tins at 1s. 6d. and 4s. 8d. By Deb Chemical Proprietaries, Ltd., Forfar Works, Spencer Road, Belper, Derbyshire.

▶ **A hard yarn:** New on the market is an all-wool carpet with a difference. The yarn has been given an extra twist which helps to make it more hard wearing, uncrushable, and retain a firm edge where cut. It is moth-proofed in manufacture with the Dielmoth process, and is warm and comfortable underfoot.

Templetex carpet is available in ten widths, ranging from 2 ft. 3 in. to 15 ft. and there are ten shades to choose from.

The price per square yard is 49s. 6d. The manufacturers are James Templeton Co., Ltd., Templeton Street, Glasgow, S.E.

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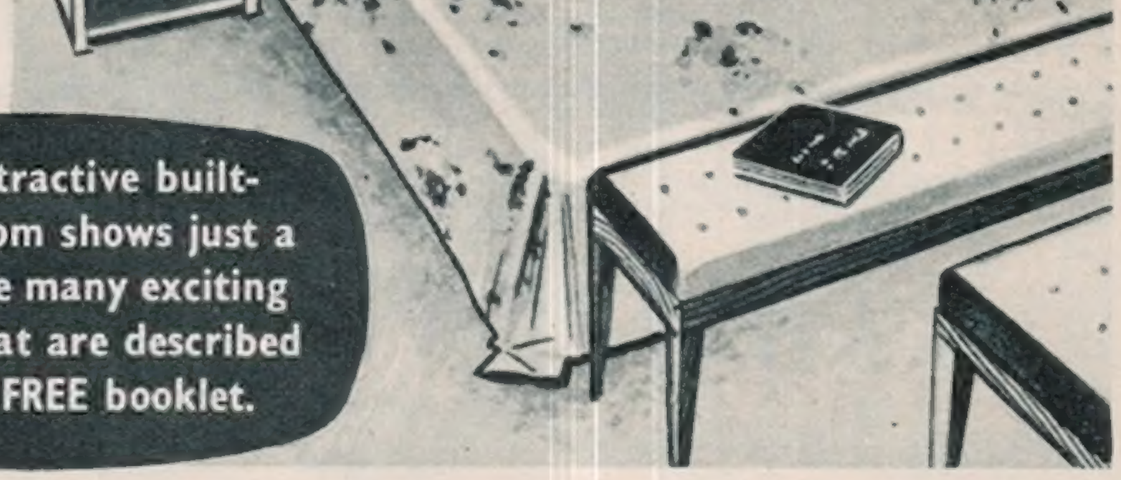

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